

CHARLES JOHN CORFE

NAVAL CHAPLAIN—BISHOP

BY
THE RIGHT REVEREND
BISHOP MONTGOMERY, D.D., D.C.L.

WITH
AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE BISHOP IN COREA.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS,
15, TUFTON STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1

1927

Price One Shilling and Sixpence.

Class

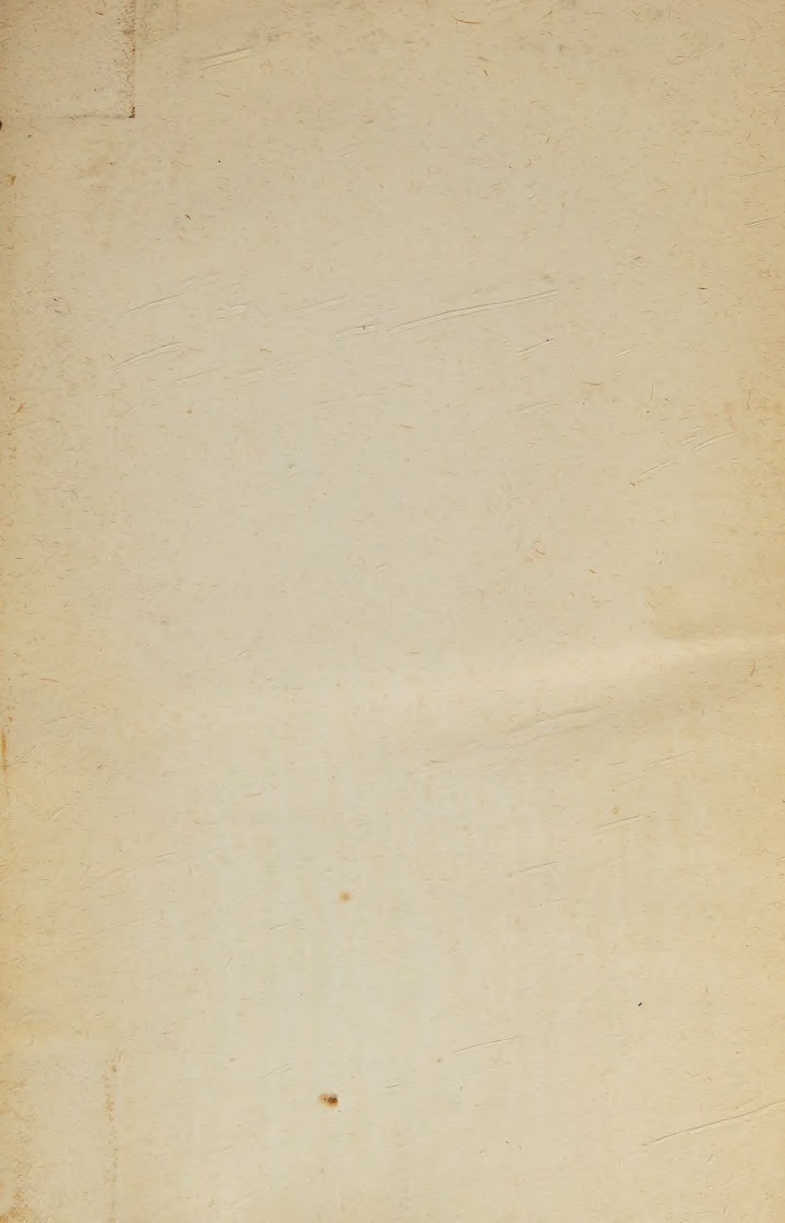
92

Book

C 812

General Theological Seminary Library

CHELSEA SQUARE, NEW YORK





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

CHARLES JOHN CORFE

OTHER BOOKS UNIFORM WITH
THIS VOLUME AND BY THE
SAME AUTHOR.

BROOK DEEDES.

Sometime Archdeacon of Lucknow
and later Archdeacon of Hampstead.
With foreword by the Archbishop of
Canterbury.

FRANCIS BALFOUR OF BASUTOLAND.

Evangelist and Bishop. With foreword
by the Archbishop of Capetown.

PRICE 1/6 EACH (by post 1/9).

FROM ALL BOOKSELLERS OR
S.P.G. OFFICE, 15, TUFTON STREET,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1.

CHARLES JOHN CORFE

NAVAL CHAPLAIN—BISHOP

1843-1921

BY

Henry Hutchinson

THE RIGHT REVEREND

BISHOP MONTGOMERY, D.D., D.C.L.

1847

Sometime Bishop of Tasmania ; late Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts ; Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral ; Prelate of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

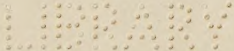
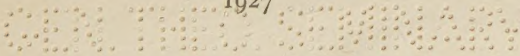
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE

RT. REV. MARK NAPIER TROLLOPE,

Bishop in Corea.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS,
15, TUFTON STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1

1927



92
C812

82061

MADE IN U.S.A.
Y8881

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREFACE	7
INTRODUCTION	9
CHAPTER I. THE EARLY YEARS—ORDINATION ..	15
CHAPTER II. HIS NAVAL CAREER	21
CHAPTER III. THE BEGINNING OF THE EPISCOPATE	43
CHAPTER IV. THE QUARTERLY INTERCESSION PAPER AND THE SOCIETY OF THE SACRED MISSION	53
CHAPTER V. COREA. THE FIRST YEARS	63
CHAPTER VI. THE YEARS 1897 TO 1904—RELATIONS WITH S.P.G., HIS MUSIC, BENE- FACTIONS, AND SOME CHARACTER SKETCHES	77
CHAPTER VII. RESIGNATION — FURTHER LABOURS— THE LAST YEARS	89

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Charles John Corfe, first Bishop in Corea	<i>Frontispiece</i>
“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.” Music by Bishop Corfe	<i>Facing p. 32</i>
Bishop Corfe and a little Corean boy ..	33
St. Michael & All Angels, Chemulpo. (The first church of the Mission in Corea) ..	56
The Compass	57
The Bishop's ‘Palace,’ Chemulpo	64
Bishop Corfe in his ‘Palace’ at Chemulpo. (Reproduced from a pen and ink drawing)	65

PREFACE.

Those who have enabled this short memoir to be written have perhaps rescued almost from oblivion (at least so far as the young generation is concerned) a remarkable personality. Moreover Charles Corfe inaugurated efforts which have now become known to Churchmen everywhere. It is sufficient to say here that he created what is now known throughout the Anglican world as the "Quarterly Intercession Paper," and he was also the founder of what is now the Society of the Sacred Mission at Kelham. In addition he was a naval chaplain than whom there can never have been anyone more beloved and more respected. The following pages are an attempt to set forth a life with such achievements, combined all through with a beautiful and winning nature.

H.H.M.

INTRODUCTION

BY THE BISHOP IN COREA

Bishop Montgomery's intimation that he had been asked to bring out a memoir of my old chief, Bishop Corfe, only reached me shortly before I left Corea this spring on sick leave, and I found myself unable, therefore, at the moment, to accept his invitation to contribute anything to the work he had in hand. I should, however, have been very unhappy if this memoir of one to whom I and the Church in Corea owe so much, had appeared without some acknowledgment of that debt from my pen. Now I gladly avail myself of Bishop Montgomery's kind permission, at the eleventh hour, to supply an introduction.

I was only a stripling of twenty-seven summers, still in the "first fine rapture" of my first curacy, and constantly haunted with the idea that I ought some day to be a missionary, when Bishop Corfe first crossed my path, with the result that the idea was rapidly translated into action. I had, of course, known of him vaguely as a famous Naval Chaplain and an "Anglo-Catholic" stalwart in the stormy 'seventies and 'eighties of the last century.* But

*Charles John Corfe was one of the 450 priests—popularly stigmatized as the 450 "prophets of Baal"—who in 1873, rather to the dismay of Dr. Pusey and the older Tractarians, presented a memorial to the Convocation of Canterbury, claiming official sanction for nearly everything that Anglo-Catholics have been fighting for ever since, and ending with

the first thing that brought me closely into contact with him was the characteristic letter which he wrote to the *Guardian*, just after his consecration on All Saints' Day, 1889. The letter was very brief and to the effect that the Archbishop of Canterbury had asked him to give up his work in the Navy and to go to Corea, an invitation which he had felt bound to accept; that S.P.G. had promised him £600 a year, and that he wanted five priests to come and share it with him! Magnificent—if, perhaps, rather quixotic! Anyhow, *I* felt that here was the missionary bishop for *me*—a conclusion in which I was confirmed so soon as I had met him face to face and fallen under the spell of his personality. Hard-pressed, however, as he was for men, I soon found that he was by no means prepared to accept all and sundry who offered themselves, without assuring himself that, on the main points of what would now be called “Catholic faith and practice,” they were prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder with him. And surely here he was right. For whatever may be said in favour of the “glorious comprehensiveness” of the Church of England *in England*, or even in English-speaking colonies, missionaries in a non-Christian land are plainly very seriously handicapped unless they can agree

the astounding proposal (for 1873!) that priests should be definitely trained and licensed for their work as confessors. The reply of the “powers that be” took the form of the P.W.R. Act of 1874! It is interesting to record that Bishop Corfe's last night in England before sailing for Corea, was spent with Mr. Bell-Cox, the last priest imprisoned under that Act.

to a substantially unanimous presentment of the faith which is in them. This, of course, coming on the top of his insistence that those who threw in their lot with him must be content to work for a bare living wage and without hope of marriage, naturally added largely to his difficulties in securing a staff of clergy—difficulties which were enhanced by the prevailing ignorance about Corea and by a curious misconception of the nature and purpose of the Mission, current in precisely those circles to which he would most naturally have looked for help. But the standard which he set, and the demands which he made, certainly impressed a very definite character on the Mission, which has happily persisted to this day. And one cannot but feel that what the Mission may have lost thereby in force of numbers, it gained in intensive power. And so at the present time, while the five or six thousand native Christians, who compose the following of the English Church Mission, may appear but a handful by the side of the vast amorphous masses who have gathered round the heavily-financed and well advertised American Protestant Missions,* most people would agree that there is a definiteness of outlook and solidity

*Missionaries of the American Methodist and American Presbyterian Churches had arrived in Corea three or four years before Bishop Corfe, but had hardly then made an effective beginning of that work which was later to grow to such large dimensions. They had, however, already (*more Americano*) organized a "Permanent Executive Bible Committee for Corea," and wrote to inform Bishop Corfe that as the responsible head of a '*fully chartered Protestant Evangelical Church*' he was entitled to be represented on this. The Bishop replied

of conviction about the former which is an asset of incalculable value. And if the modest boast made at the end of his fifteen years' episcopate, to the effect that "the ordering of our churches and their ritual are such as to enable any of our Christians (English, Korean, or Japanese) travelling from one station to another to feel instantly at home"—if this boast still holds good, as it does, it is to Bishop Corfe's foresight that this sense of diocesan unity, and of loyalty to the diocese as a substantial unit within the greater unity of the Catholic Church, is primarily due. And the gain of this is so obvious that it hardly needs even the excuse which he made for such attention to detail, by quoting from the statutes drawn up for the Cathedral of Truro by its first bishop (Archbishop Benson): "All which is here set down that none may trouble themselves or others of small matters, when they would be about great things."

I am glad that Bishop Montgomery has brought out the fact that, although he never attained to any freedom in the colloquial use of the Korean language, he did acquire, by dint of hard work with his Korean teacher, a very considerable knowledge of the book language—so much so that he was able to take a really substantial part in our translation work. Nothing went out without his *imprimatur*, which was not lightly given. But his

that *this was new to him as a description of the Church of England*, which he felt unable to compromise by accepting the invitation as it stood. He was, however, willing to allow one of his missionaries to sit and work unofficially with the Board of Translators appointed by the Committee, who gladly fell in with this arrangement.

inability to converse with—or address—his Korean neophytes in their own tongue was a sore burden to one who had spent all his earlier life on terms of such intimacy with his sailor flocks. And it was this which weighed largely with him in deciding to lay down in 1904 the burden which he had borne so bravely for fifteen years.

He felt also very keenly the perennial difficulty of keeping his young and growing diocese adequately staffed with clergy, though he was always generosity itself in recognizing the difficulties of others, when circumstances brought them to a “parting of the ways.” I experienced this generosity in no small measure when, in 1902, after over ten years’ work in the Mission, I asked him, for reasons which seemed to me urgent, to allow me to suspend my return to Corea indefinitely, and shortly after accepted the Vicarage of S. Saviour’s, Poplar, in succession to his old friend, Fr. Dolling. All the more, therefore, was it a real delight to me to see the great pleasure my appointment to the Bishopric in 1911 gave him. I think he felt that after all he had not been my “sea-daddy” in vain. God rest his soul!

✠ MARK NAPIER TROLLOPE,

Bishop in Corea

*(Chaplain to Bp. Corfe & Snr. Priest
of the Korean Mission, 1890-1902)*

Nov. 14, 1926

CHARLES JOHN CORFE

NAVAL CHAPLAIN—BISHOP

CHAPTER I.

THE EARLY YEARS—ORDINATION.

Charles John Corfe was born in the Close, Salisbury, on May 14, 1843, and was the eldest son of Dr. C. W. Corfe, Mus.Doc., Organist of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. His father was a distinguished organist and composer, and all the sons were accomplished musicians. Indeed the family had a long musical ancestry. For example Joseph Corfe was an intimate friend of Handel, who one day wrote to him an urgent letter begging him to come up to London to be present at the first rehearsal of his new oratorio, "The Messiah." His mother was beautiful, and a deeply religious Churchwoman, associated with Dr. Pusey and many of the other leaders of the Oxford movement. The family lived in old Beam Hall, in Merton Lane; and those who know Merton College Chapel will be amused to learn that Charles' portrait, together with those of his mother and brothers, are painted on its ceiling, Pollen, one of the Fellows, a great friend of the Corfes, being the artist. Years afterwards Charles was amused to find that he figured aloft as a cherub. "I should have expected to find

myself amongst the ‘imps.’ I assure you that then I was a horrid little creature and gave my parents an infinity of trouble.”

When very young, he was sent to Lancing College, but was soon removed to a school at Langley. The following extract from Corfe’s own account of those days, printed in the magazine of St. Michael’s College, Tenbury, in 1918, not only recalls a forgotten piece of Church history, but is one more link in the musical traditions he inherited.

“No account of the early days of St. Michael’s College, Tenbury, would be complete without a reference to its origin: for the church and college were a continuation rather than a beginning. For these we must look back to the disgraceful riots which disturbed the church and congregation of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, in London, of which the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett was vicar, about 1850. Sir Frederick Ouseley (a young deacon) was one of Mr. Bennett’s curates, and the main supporter of the choir of St. Barnabas, whose surplices were the principal cause of the riots. Mr. Bennett resigned, and became Vicar of Frome. Sir Frederick ceased to be a curate, but saw in his vicar’s resignation, an opportunity for carrying out a scheme which he had, even then, begun to think and pray about—a scheme by which he might devote to the Church of England his wealth and his musical talents. Taking a large country house, about a mile from Langley, Buckinghamshire, he transferred from St. Barnabas the boys of the choir

and three of the men, who were willing to join him in the undertaking. At the same time he engaged the services of the Rev. H. Fyffe (a graduate of Oxford), who became responsible for all but the musical training of the boys, whose welfare in domestic matters was cared for by Mrs. Fyffe. In Lonehill House, a chapel and schoolroom (both detached from the house) were provided. In the former a good-sized organ was placed, and in this chapel cathedral services (morning and evening) were performed daily, except on Sunday mornings, when the boys walked to the parish church at Langley. When boys' voices broke, their places were taken by others, of whom, in 1854, I was one ; the total number of (I think) twelve being always kept up.

“ While this part of Sir Frederick's scheme was taking shape in Langley, the future warden of St. Michael's was looking about him for a suitable site on which to build his college. Whilst staying with the late Prebendary Joyce, Rector of Burford, a brother of his old college tutor, he was struck with the beauty of the Old Wood Common, in the neighbourhood of which he determined to buy land and then to build the church and college of St. Michael's, Tenbury, which have been a happy home for so many of us.

“ And so it came about that my name (or that of my schoolfellow, Hugh Deane) was the first name in the register of St. Michael's College.

“ Let me only add that in the spring of 1857 my voice broke, and I left the college until my return (as Assistant Master) in 1865.—*Floreat Collegium.*”

It will be best to set down here his further association with Tenbury. The Principal, the Rev. E. H. Swann, writes : " He became in later years a Fellow of the College, and when the statutes were revised in 1921 and a Governing Body set up, he was elected a member of it. He left £50 in his will for me to spend as I thought best on some useful object either for the College, or chapel, or parish (the College chapel being also the parish church), and we spent the money on a Persian sanctuary carpet. After his death a sum of nearly £100 was subscribed, chiefly by the Fellows and 'old boys' of the College, and new oak fronts to the choir stalls were placed in the chapel to his memory."

From Tenbury College he passed on to Elizabeth College, Guernsey, spending there five very happy years. He gained many prizes, including one that was called the Governor of Guernsey's Prize, of the value of £10, much coveted, of course, by all and especially because it was to be conferred upon " the best all-round boy "—the boys themselves being the electors. There is not much more to tell about his school-days. Writing late in life he says he was taken early in the 'fifties as a little boy by his mother to Swanage, "instead of to Madeira, where I was ordered by the doctor, who pronounced me weak in the lungs. No doubt I was taken to church, but of that I have no recollection—not even of the 'toast racks,' a delightful idea. The seats there are doubtless put together as close as the capstan bars on board ship when they rig

church. Supported at each end by wash deck buckets they form the seats of the congregation, to whom kneeling is always a physical impossibility." [I hope no Swanage church will take this as a criticism on present-day customs.] Two remarks may be set down at once, namely, that Charles all his life bubbled with humour, and naval customs supplied him with inexhaustible illustrations.

In due time he went up to All Souls, Oxford. It seemed as if he was always to be associated with the musical profession, for on his staircase there lived a son of Samuel Sebastian Wesley. His chief Oxford friends were Professor Owen, and one whose name was to become fragrant in Melanesia, Dr. Codrington. The only allusion to his Oxford career which I have discovered is in a letter written from Seoul in 1902, after receiving a photograph of the restored reredos at All Souls: "I cannot let your little gift come without a word of grateful reply. It is the only bit of All Souls that I have visible about my belongings. I owe a great deal to that place, both College and Chapel, and ought to have done more credit to it than I fear I did. It was nice to see my place in Chapel: for though you supposed you were sending me a picture of the reredos, had you known it you might have sent me this little card as a picture of the seat which for nearly all my undergraduate days I occupied, furthest east on the port (I mean the north) side. But you know there were none of those splendours in my time.

The woodwork of the roof was completely concealed by canvas painted a sepia colour with gilt roses in the centres of the panels. As for the east end that, too, was entirely covered from roof to altar by a picture on canvas of the assumption of the founder, Archbishop Chichele, who was flying up to heaven in a big cope and mitre, being beckoned up by St. Peter who had a pair of prodigious keys in his left hand, and welcomed by cherubic—very cherubic—hosts. These fat cherubs with their puffed cheeks always reminded me of little David Copperfield who, having heard of people who “played by ear,” thought that the people must have been cherubs who had no bodies to speak of. And now I would like to be an undergraduate again and occupy my old seat in Chapel.”

He took his B.A. in 1865 and his M.A. in 1869. On leaving Oxford he returned to St. Michael's, Tenbury, as an assistant master, being ordained Deacon in 1866 and Priest in 1867; but I can only give the facts and can find no details of interest to chronicle during so important a period of his life.

CHAPTER II.

HIS NAVAL CAREER.

Whilst Corfe was at Elizabeth College he had determined, by some means or other, to associate himself with the Navy, stimulated thereto by his cousin, J. H. Corfe, then in the school, and a few years his junior. J. H. Corfe became a middy—Charles being too old, bided his time. I may say in passing that these two were life-long friends, in closest intimacy, and no one has been of greater assistance for the compilation of this memoir than Charles' old school fellow and relative, now Captain J. H. Corfe, R.N. In 1867, Charles saw his way clear and was gazetted a Naval Chaplain and posted to H.M.S. *Doris*. It will be convenient if I set down at once his full naval record of service.

Served in H.M.S. *Doris*, N. America and W. Indies, 1867-69; *Inconstant*, channel and detached squadron, 1869-72; *Cambridge*, Devonport, 1872-73; *Victor Emanuel*, Cape Coast Castle (Ashanti War Medal), 1874; *Audacious*, China, 1874-79; Royal Naval Barracks, Sheerness, 1879-81; resigned commission as Naval Chaplain 1881; chaplain to Bishop of N. China, Chefoo, 1881-83; restored to the active list with original seniority by Order in Council of November 6, 1883; Devonport Dockyard, 1884; H.M.S. *Minotaur*, channel squadron, 1884-85; R.N. Div. Chatham, 1885; H.M. Dockyard,

Malta, 1885-86 ; H.M.S. *Alexandra*, 1886-88 ; H.M. Dockyard, Portsmouth, 1888-89 ; placed on retired list at his own request, September, 1889.

Was there ever a chaplain in the Navy so exactly fitted for his vocation as Charles John Corfe ? It seems to me that no post for a man in Holy Orders is so completely lived in the lime-light. There is no privacy. The chaplain's real life and character are being watched all the time by those who are not only most shrewd judges of men, but also nourish a very high ideal, albeit unspoken as to the life expected from a man of God.

Those who stand the test become of course a mighty means of grace. No one could ever have stood it better than Corfe. I am not aware that he was a preacher in the ordinary sense ; but it is certain he won all hearts by his selfless, simple, consistent bearing, coupled with his ceaseless devotion towards every member of the ship's complement. He took to his heart at once the whole service, from the admiral to the youngest boy on the lower deck. In 1897, I was driving with him through London in a hansom, talking freely. Suddenly he was silent ; presently he said : " I beg your pardon, but did you see those two bluejackets on the pavement ? " Several have told me that, when walking with him he would rush across the street to accost any sailor in naval dress, just to learn who he was. I can hardly hope to express adequately Corfe's devotion to the Navy, and the

response of the Navy in return. I cannot help calling it unique.

It will be unnecessary in so short a memoir to divide his experiences among his various ships: I will just put together details grave, and also gay. Corfe would not have been the success he was had he not perpetually enjoyed the humours of life.

The fun began almost at once. His cousin supplies the following: "Charles was supposed to suffer from a weak chest, and the doctors advised a beard. In those days, of course, officers and men were only allowed to wear side whiskers; so a dispensing order was obtained from the Admiralty permitting him the privilege. On joining the *Doris* his irate Captain nearly had a fit when Charles reported himself with a full and flowing beard and moustache. Corfe, however, was equal to the occasion and had come prepared for the outburst. Putting his hand into his pocket he produced the Admiralty permit. This did not, however, soothe the irate Captain, who saw his chance and said: 'This says nothing about a moustache; go down at once and shave it off.' In due time the *Doris* sailed for the American station, and on arrival at Halifax they found that Mr. Ward Hunt had become First Lord of the Admiralty. One of his first acts being to grant to the Navy the boon of permitting officers and men to wear beards and moustaches, but with the proviso that it was to be 'all or nothing'—no fancy combinations. So he grew his moustache, otherwise he would have been out of uniform."

“ Corfe’s messmates often told me how they used to ‘ rag ’ him by coming into his cabin and saying : ‘ I say, padre, where is your bed ? ’ It was his custom to roll the bed up, and put it away in the corner and sleep on the bare sack-ing.” Another naval friend said he slung a hammock in his cabin so as to have it clear in the day-time for meetings and opportunities of quiet for the men. Another, now an admiral, writes : “ I was at Sheerness for a few months before going to sea in the *Tourmaline*, one of Lord Clanwilliam’s flying squadron, 1880-2, Corfe was Chaplain of the barracks then, and was most kind to me as an unfledged youngster ; and with others I was an honorary member of his rooms, and he introduced me to residents and friends. He had an extraordinary influence, not only with the officers but with bluejackets of all kinds—good and bad. He was so thoroughly human and understood men and got hold of their confidence.” To illustrate these last words I insert the following letter from Corfe to a friend :

“ When I was first appointed to the Navy as Chaplain I was sent to the West Indies, and in those days the punishment of flogging was very common, and one of the first things I remember was that I was called up with the rest of the crew to witness the flogging of a sailor. He was a great strapping fellow, and the Captain said to him before the flogging commenced, ‘ now you will quite understand that if I have any more of your insolence you will be flogged again.’ The

man said nothing, and was tied up to be flogged, and the quartermasters were told to do their duty, the man having been ordered 'fourbag,' that is to say, each quartermaster kept a cat-o'-nine-tails in a bag, and the cat became somewhat worn after a dozen strokes had been given, and the punishment was then continued by three other quartermasters in succession ; that is to say, the prisoner was to have four dozen.

The man was terribly punished, but bore it without a murmur until the last stroke was given, when he turned round to the Captain and said, 'domino,' which in naval phraseology means 'scored off you old man,' or to that effect. The Captain therefore said "you will be punished again," and turned to the doctor and told him to report when the man was fit for punishment. The Captain then sent for me and told me that there was much more punishment going on than he cared for, and that I must go to the man and see what I could do. I felt the hopelessness of the position : here was I a raw chaplain asked to go and interview a great big insubordinate sailor. However, there was nothing to be done but to obey orders, and after about a fortnight I got the man to unwillingly say he was sorry, and I so reported to the Captain. In due course the doctor reported the man as fit for punishment, and all hands were ordered on deck. It was necessary for the Captain to write out a warrant in connection with each punishment, and when we were all assembled he took the warrant and he said, 'there is a new Naval

Chaplain come on board and we are not going to have so much punishment in the future as we have in the past.' He then tore the warrant in half and said, 'take the man down, there will be no punishment to-day.' To my dying day I shall never forget the ringing cheers of the crew. I may add that the man who was punished turned out, in the end, extremely well."

Corfe was in the West Indies when the earthquake occurred which submerged the island of Tortola, and the *Doris* was sent to the relief of the survivors. When later he was on the *Inconstant* he passed through the storm in which the *Captain* was lost. *Inconstant* was sailing in line next behind the *Captain* and must have passed over her as she sank. But the heavy gale and the darkness prevented anything being known of the disaster till daybreak, when a signal was made to search for her. *Inconstant* being the fastest ship was ordered to take the news to England at top speed, and though the gale continued heavy gun drill was carried out.

Later again, Corfe was in the *Victor Emanuel*, the hospital ship on the West African Coast during the Ashanti War, and received the medal and clasp. Again, when he was appointed to the *Alexandra*, the flagship of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, his musical talents were much in request. I may as well here record his intimacy with members of the Royal Family—associations which were continued on most affectionate terms till the day of his death. Their Royal Highnesses Prince Edward and

Prince George were middies on the *Alexandra* when Corfe was the chaplain. King George and Queen Mary have always kept a warm place in their hearts for one of the most unassuming and devoted of men. With members of the family of the late Duke of Edinburgh he kept up a close correspondence after his Maltese life. It was, however, like him to leave instructions that his correspondence with Royal Personages which he had preserved should at his death be suppressed.

He had a daily Celebration on his ships, his cabin was always open, and when he could, he held prayer meetings. It is almost needless to state that he kept up his friendships with those who had served with him as boys, his correspondence with all parts of the world being very large. After his death a tin box full of letters was discovered, but there was a hole in it and sea water had reduced its contents to pulp. Many of us would have liked to have burrowed into those confidential and intimate relationships.

The Book of Private Prayer for Seamen and Mariners Afloat (S.P.C.K.) is the title of a little book lying before me breathing intensity, compiled by Corfe in 1878. Whether it is in use still I know not. It opens with delightful advice most applicable to life at sea. The headings, page after page, are delightful. Prayers, when outward bound, homeward bound, on commission to a ship, on joining a ship, on paying off, in an unhappy ship; prayers after sinning, and when not found out, and again

when awaiting punishment, in cells or in prison. Prayers for officers—petty and non-commissioned officers, masters-at-arms, ship's corporals, for boys, for a sentry going on guard. Helps for Holy Communion, of course.

The following letter, written more than twenty years ago by the Chaplain of H.M.S. *Inconstant*, was given to W. R. M. (boy 1st class) on the occasion of his taking his first "trick" at the wheel after joining the ship. W. R. M. is now, we trust, in the "haven where he would be." He became a ship's corporal and master-at-arms. The latter rating he held in H.M.S. *Atalanta*—a ship which never reached her port, as all may remember when they look at the beautiful East window in the Dockyard Chapel at Portsmouth and read the touching inscription on the wall beneath it.

Ships have changed much since that day. But they have still to be steered, and the letter is printed in the hope that some of the deeper lessons underlying all the ordinary actions of a man-o'-war's routine may be brought closer home to seamen of the present day :

"Dear Lad,

Whilst you are at the wheel—your first wheel—I am thinking of you and have been saying for you to God, "Prevent him, O God, in all his doings with Thy most gracious favour, and further him with Thy continual help, that in all

his works begun, continued and ended in Thee he may glorify Thy Holy Name and, finally, by Thy mercy obtain everlasting life." You see, your first wheel is furnishing me with thoughts, which, as I cannot speak them to you, I am writing down. Surely you don't think me foolish for praying to God that He may be with you in such a work as steering the ship. If we pray that He may go before us in all our doings, if we pray that we may begin, continue, and end every work in Him, surely this two hours work of yours this morning is one in which we may look for an answer to this prayer. Can you not see, dear lad, that to do our work willingly, *as to God*, faithfully and thoroughly *as before God*, is a very high privilege? To think that we poor sinners can please the good God by doing our little duties in Him and for Him and to Him—out of love to Him and for His sake. Besides, I have been thinking of something else. How the attention which you ought to pay to steering should be carried into every other matter. Is not your life the ocean and heaven your port? Have not you got the steering of another ship—your body I mean, to look after? O my dear lad, keep your eye on the compass, keep your ship on her true course.

And then, too, you are not alone at the wheel. You are not steering by yourself. You are helping the other three. Doubtless you consider yourself the weakest and most ignorant helmsman there. Yet you are helping to keep the ship on her course. And so can you help others to

keep their course. Young and weak as you are, you can yet help Jem and Fred and Wyrill—and many another perhaps, to sail on the course which brings us to our Heavenly Home. You can help *them* by letting them see how much in earnest *you* are in keeping the true course—how attentive you are to your duties as helmsman.

Again, you can help them by pulling with them—not against them. I hear the tiller ropes now and I know that whichever way the weather helmsman has turned the wheel you have helped him by turning it the same way. What good would you do, indeed, if you tried to turn it the opposite way? So you may help others by pulling together with them—so long as they are keeping the right course. And supposing they do not keep the right course—what then? Why, then you must pull against them and pull them into the right course again. You ask me how you shall do this by yourself—so weak, so young, so inexperienced? My dearest lad, in the answer to this question lies the whole secret. You shall do it and prevail by Him Who is preventing you in all your doings. So long as you begin and continue anything in Him you shall succeed. Nay, He will cause you to succeed. A little one shall become as a thousand. He will strengthen your hands, give wisdom to your mind, courage to your heart, earnestness to your feet.

For, after all, He is the true Helmsman, and so long as *you* keep the right course with Him, dear lad, He will enable you to do all things, little and great, for yourself and for others according to His Holy will.

And now pray for me that I who have prayed for you may not myself become a castaway.

Believe me your faithful,

C. J. CORFE."

But also those who knew Corfe at sea often heard his infectious laughter. No one was more quick to see the humorous side. Consequently it is not surprising to hear that he knew his Dickens from beginning to end.

On Board the "Anson" Flagship.

"Yesterday I had a very novel and exciting experience. Asked to preach on board the *Queen*, I went on board and found every preparation made to do me honour (he was Bishop then). It was the Feast of the Purification : the text, 'This is our God ; we have waited for him,' and the point was that whereas our Blessed Lord caused everywhere great astonishment by His mighty deeds, Symeon accepted Him for what He was when a little child. . . .

The service was on the upper deck, with awnings and curtains making all snug on that vast quarter deck. I had got as far as the astonishment of the people because even the wind and sea obeyed that Voice, and had just got to Symeon's experiences of faith : 'Lord, now lettest thou,' etc., when in the middle of the sentence a big squall, with great suddenness and force swept away in a moment, awnings, curtains and books ; a deluge of rain wetting us all ! It was extremely funny. Lady Drury and her

ladies who had come off to church, fled below by the nearest ladder. I followed on their heels, and 'furl awnings,' 'unrig church,' were the rapid orders given by the folk in authority. No more church that forenoon. I told the skipper—Captain Troubridge, a dear friend of mine, who always read the lessons—that he had brought it about with his 'clouds return after the rain,' because for some extraordinary reason, instead of reading the first lesson for the day he chose to read the last chapter of Ecclesiastes ! ”

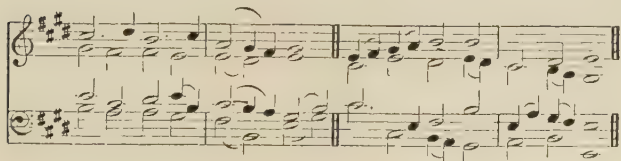
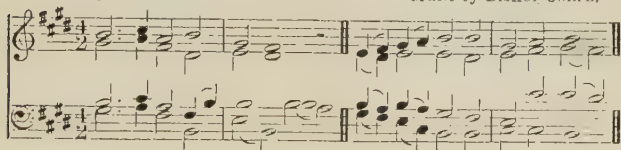
January, 1913.

“The senior midshipman is the son of my great friend at ——. He is generally known as Jones, his fellow cadets at Osborne having flatly refused to recognise him by the long German name of ———. Can't “you hear them? What is your name? ———. What? You must be called Jones. And Jones is the name he will carry with him all through his grades.”

The following is sent me by Admiral Seymour E. Erskine : “I received once from Bishop Corfe a somewhat embarrassing commission. He was anxious to send His Majesty King Edward two Corean calves, and I rashly undertook the preliminary passage to H.M.S. *Barfleur*, under orders for home, whose Captain, Sir George Warrender, had also fallen under the Bishop's influence. Unfortunately the *Barfleur* was detained some months after the arrival on board of the growing pair, and I never heard the last of them from the Commander, who

‘The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us
full of grace and truth.’

Words by CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI. Music by BISHOP CORFE.



I

Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, Love divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
Stars and Angels gave the sign.

II

Worship we the Godhead,
Love incarnate, Love divine,
Worship we our JESUS;
But wherewith the Sacred sign?

III

Love shall be our token,
Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
Love for plea and gift and sign.



BISHOP CORFE AND A LITTLE COREAN BOY.

attributed his unwelcome guests to me and not to the Bishop. I visited them subsequently at the Zoo, and felt for that Commander when I saw their huge size. They went by the name of 'The Bishop's Calves.' "

I feel sure Corfe would wish me to print the following episode related in one of his letters to a friend, referring to a visit to the China Station during the Boxer Riots in 1900. I have not asked the permission of the distinguished Admiral alluded to for fear he might refuse !

" I was on the China Station during the Chinese War, and the ship lay some way off the mouth of the river, because the water was so shallow she could not come close in. It was the Admiral's ship, and I was on deck with the Admiral, and to our astonishment we saw in the distance a great volume of smoke followed by a tremendous explosion. We could not make out what on earth had happened. The explosion took place somewhere up the river. However, after a time a ship's boat came from the river and made for the flag-ship and came alongside, and the Admiral said to the officer in the boat, ' what has happened ? ' the reply was, ' I have blown up the Taku Forts, sir.' The Admiral said, ' have you done that under orders ? ' The officer replied, ' no, sir.' ' Then,' said the Admiral, ' consider yourself under arrest ; but you had better now come in and have some lunch and tell us about it ! ' "

[This officer, then a Lieutenant, was Roger Keyes.]

Corfe was serving in H.M.S. *Audacious* on the China Station, from 1874 to 1879. At Chefoo he met the two missionaries (supported by S.P.G.), the Rev. Miles Greenwood and the Rev. C. P. Scott, gave them a most cordial welcome and entered with heart and soul into all their problems. From that time he became a fervent supporter of the North China Mission. In 1880 the North China Bishopric was founded, the Rev. C. P. Scott being the first Bishop, and Corfe resigned his work in the Navy in 1881 in order to help him. It was a noble and an unselfish thing to give up a vocation for which he was so pre-eminently fitted, in order to undertake a work for which he may not after all have been nearly so well suited. He arrived in China in 1881 with three young laymen, whom he proposed to train as missionaries—not at home, but in the country for which they were destined. It appears that he considered the plan a failure, an experience which was to have good effect in coming years. He left China for England in 1883 on hearing that his father was on his death-bed. Just after his departure his cousin in the Navy landed at Chefoo, but was disappointed at missing Charles. Here he learnt that Charles had injured his health by trying to live on a Chinese diet. And now a significant thing happened. When he was at home the Admiralty were desirous to reinstate Charles as a chaplain. This was no slight testimony to his worth, since there was no precedent for the re-appointment of an officer after he had resigned his commission

in the Navy. It was necessary in fact to obtain an Order in Council for the purpose. Not only was he reinstated, but also he received back his seniority in the service. In December, 1883, he was appointed to Portsmouth Dockyard. Then in 1886 he was serving on H.M.S. *Alexandra*, under the Duke of Edinburgh. Several references have already been made to his life on board and ashore there. The following extracts from a letter to his brother Robert are made all the more interesting because of the contrast between his house at Malta and the "Palace" at Seoul a few years afterwards.

R.N. HOSPITAL, MALTA, *Nov. 30, 1885.*

"My work lies in all sorts of places involving a great deal of running about. To-day I have spent over 2s. 6d. in boat hire, the average fare being fourpence. Yesterday I was in a boat ten times, being pulled to my various services . . . The dockyard work is very distracting and difficult to overtake. . . . Yesterday I had two Celebrations and four sermons, to say nothing of having mostly been my own organist and choirmaster. . . ." (He describes his house)—
"A very large and magnificent house it is, having 16 rooms, large and small, not counting two bath-rooms—one with a fresh-water bath, and the other, a veritable swimming bath, into which the sea comes freely through apertures left in the wall. The house is on the level of the sea and stands close enough to it for me to be able to pitch the ends of my cigars into it

from my verandah. The rooms are mostly of colossal proportions. They are all some 30ft. high, and the drawing-room is about 25ft. square. It looks out into my garden—or rather, my gardens, for there are four of them rising one above the others on plateaux. Here I watch daily the ripening process of my twenty-four orange and lemon trees, my vines and fig trees, my cabbages, potatoes, tomatoes, etc. . . .”

But I pass on to his choirs. “At both Hospital and Dockyard churches we have a surpliced choir. The material is of the roughest. It is sufficient to say that not one of the twelve boys knows one note of music from another.” In another letter he speaks of going to live on board the *Alexandra*: “Already I have begun the ‘band’ agony. Not long ago I sent the Duke of Edinburgh a pretty large list of music suitable to be performed by large military bands, for he is very fond of getting all the ships’ bands in the fleet and massing them together ashore. We once mustered 100 performers.”

Here are two estimates of Corfe, one from the quarter-deck and the other from the lower-deck. Admiral Sir Stanley C. Colville writes:—

“My long and treasured friendship with Corfe commenced in March, 1886, when we both joined H.M.S. *Alexandra* at Malta, he as chaplain and I as a junior lieutenant. The *Alexandra* was the flagship of H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Station. In May, 1888, to the great sorrow of every officer and man, Corfe left

the *Alexandra*, being appointed Chaplain of Portsmouth Dockyard. He was indeed irreplaceable, his influence amongst officers and men was unique, he was beloved and deeply respected by all.

During my naval career I never was again shipmates with a man who could do so much good in a ship, and he held such delightful Sunday morning and evening services on board, preaching such excellent and suitable sermons ; with his great musical gifts he organised a really splendid choir and the evening service (which usually, I fear, is thinly attended on board ship) in the *Alexandra* was crowded, and people used to come off from the shore to take part in it. The choir were so good that they were in request ashore for concerts, etc. Corfe loved the British sailor and marine and was a welcome visitor on the lower-deck, where he constantly went to talk with the men and share their joys and sorrows.

“ His tact was wonderful, and if anyone by chance said anything in his presence he did not approve of, the rebuke was always a ‘ model ’—for example, at dinner one night in the ward-room a young officer sitting next Corfe was being helped to soup and the servant upset some of the soup into the officer’s lap who, in the heat of the moment used strong language at the servant ; but he suddenly remembered Corfe and turned to him saying : ‘ Oh, I beg your pardon, Padre.’ The reply came in that soft voice : ‘ Please don’t beg *my* pardon.’

His kindness of heart was proverbial, ever

ready to do a Good Samaritan act : for example, a young midshipman came on board one night under the influence of liquor ; Corfe, who had turned in, heard him staggering about outside his cabin, went outside and, to save the boy getting into trouble, took him into his cabin and put him into his bunk where he let him sleep until the morning. Corfe, I believe, slept on the deck.

“ My next news of Corfe was in 1889, when he was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if he would become the first Bishop of Corea. He, as is well known, accepted. Many of us did our best to stop him, telling him it was far more important he should carry out his great work in the Navy and save the souls of the British sailors than try and do the same with the Coreans ; but he was adamant, and his reply : ‘ If you were asked to go on active service, would you refuse ? ’

“ In January, 1899, when Captain of H.M.S. *Barfleur* on the China Station, I went in the ship to Chemulpo, Corea, and Corfe came and stayed for a week-end on my ship ; he simply revelled at once again being on board one of Her Majesty’s ships, and spent his Sunday afternoon on the lower-deck amongst his beloved blue-jackets ; he preached at the morning service and announced his intention of doing so again at the evening service, and nothing could have more shewn his magnetism for, although a stranger to nearly all on board, practically all officers and men attended that evening service. I may add, usually on Sundays it was a *very* sparse gathering.

“I went up to Seoul and saw Corfe’s naval hospital and his house built on Corean lines, with no comforts and absurdly small. The hospital, even in those early days, was doing an immense amount of good and known of all over Corea.

“I always felt he was disappointed with his work in Corea and seemed to think it had not been a success; he said he was too old when he went out, and could not learn the language, which had been such a handicap to him; he would not be convinced he had been very successful in his bishopric.

“As first and Principal Naval A.D.C. to the King, I had the sad privilege of representing His Majesty at the dear Bishop’s funeral, on July 4, 1921, when we laid him to rest at Brookwood Cemetery.”

The writer of the tribute from the lower deck had risen to be “Warrant Writer” before he retired, and now has an appointment at Gosport.

“It was my good fortune in the fall of the year 1879 to make the acquaintance of the Rev. C. J. Corfe. At that time he was Chaplain of the Royal Naval Barracks, Sheerness, where about 1000 to 1200 officers and men were quartered. And on a certain Sunday morning, at a few minutes before the time appointed for Divine Service, it fell out that no one could be found to play the harmonium. The Chaplain was in distress, and the S.O.S. flying. The Master-at-Arms (Chief of Police) despatched his myrmidons to find and capture any man who

could play the hurdy-gurdy—sailors have a nickname for everything. Owing to the unfaithfulness of chums who gave me away, I was immediately piloted to the Chaplain's cabin. I was captivated at once. He came forward to meet me, tall, slender, eyes full of mirth, and a kindly humorous manner.

“Every man who knew him respected him, and those who knew him best, loved him. A great gulf existed between officers and men of the Navy, but our Chaplain with his kindly nature and exquisite tact, easily bridged it. He was, in the truest sense of the word, an officer and a gentleman. But in private talks in his cabin to little groups who met there, he became the wise counsellor, the understanding friend, the elder brother. His cabin became a rendezvous for a certain class of thoughtful men, writing materials and cigars were at their disposal; but the host kept himself out of the way as much as possible, lest he might embarrass his visitors. Between 6 and 8 p.m. he usually came in to talk and, incidentally, usually lost his dinner in consequence. His room became, to some of us at least, an oasis in the desert. He seldom introduced religion, but everything he said or did was tinged with a deep reverence for the things of God, and a fervent desire to impart the spirit of them to his hearers.

“His sermons were simple, straightforward, outspoken and very practical. It is not an easy thing, under the limitations imposed by naval discipline, to address a congregation of many

hundreds of officers and men, and yet to speak the word of truth without giving offence to either. But the Bishop succeeded perfectly. He was as popular among his own messmates as among the men, and had always the ear of either. Concerts were given occasionally under his direction. At one of these he brought half a dozen of his friends from Magdalen College, Oxford, to assist in the programme. A few days later the refrain of one of the songs that had particularly caught on was whistled and sung all over the place—

“ Six jolly parsons all in a row, and
The best of the lot
Was our own Holy Joe.”

The chaplain in those days was known as the Holy Joe.

“ As time went on and the men came to know him better the number of his friends increased greatly. He interested himself in everything that interested them, or that would advance their spiritual or temporal welfare. Education in the Navy was at a rather low ebb, but some men aspired to better things, and these the Bishop assisted to the utmost of his power. I have known him to bring them along until they were ready to sit for a Mates' Certificate at the Board of Trade examination, and in several cases, to pay the fees incidental thereto. The Bishop was heart and soul with the Navy, proud of everything spoken in its praise, and retained his affection unaltered to the very end.”

Corfe served in the Navy till 1889, when there came a great break in his life. The official record merely says, "Placed on retired list at his own request, September, 1889," and it was then that the Duke of Edinburgh appointed him his chaplain. Probably the retiring Chaplain never experienced greater anguish than when at the call of duty he turned his back upon the work which had won his passionate affection.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNING OF THE EPISCOPATE.

In 1889, Archbishop Benson sent for Corfe in order to commission him as the first Missionary Bishop of the Anglican Church in Corea. Let me set down his own account of that interview. Any call from constituted authority was sufficient for him. Of course, he obeyed. "He (the Archbishop) told me that he had no pay to offer, that the ground was yet untrodden by English missionaries, that he had no one to give me for a companion, and that the country was unsettled and hostile to Christianity. What answer could I give him but the answer I have given? Ever since I have been to sea I have had shipmates fore and aft who constantly set me an example of devotion to duty, who have not only done dirty work cheerfully when ordered to do it, but have been foremost in volunteering for posts of difficulty and danger. Thank God the Navy teems with men and officers who are ready to jump overboard to save a drowning shipmate, or to go to the front and fight for their country. When the Archbishop asks me if I will imitate these men, how can I refuse to make the attempt? I only hope I may now profit by the good examples which have been set me."

Before his appointment was made public he went on leave in order to escape the congratulations (or condolences) of his naval friends. To

another, now an Admiral, who suggested that he was going on a forlorn hope, he answered : " But, if you had orders to attack a battleship in a dinghy you would obey." That it was in the eyes of Corfe something like a forlorn hope is made the more plain by the fact that Corfe's eighteen months at Chefoo to endeavour to train men for the North China Mission is characterised by one best able to give an opinion, as being on the spot with him, in such words as these: " It was dismal, it was a failure, so far as any sincere and unselfish effort can be such in God's good providence."

But I must add a light touch—and from Bishop Scott: " It had been announced that there was to be a Mission to Corea under a Bishop sent out by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a luncheon was in progress in Corfe's rooms at Portsmouth for about six of us. I think Edgar Jacob was one. Only the Archbishop and Corfe and I knew that Corfe had been selected, and a very pointed and searching shaft was launched by someone, ' Who is to be Bishop in Corea ? ' The party was small, it was difficult to parry. Providentially a pile of six very hot plates were put before our host and he instantly burnt his fingers, and under cover of a warning to his guests the question was shelved. But from that day to the end of his life ' the plates were very hot ' had a cryptic meaning for dear Corfe and myself."

This is not the place to embark on a full history of Corea and its problems for the

Christian Church. Those who wish to understand them can confidently be referred to Bishop Trollope's little book, *The Church in Corea* (S.P.G.) A few words chiefly culled from that book must suffice here. Corea—or Chosen, meaning Morning Calm, has been of late years the storm-centre of the Far East, providing the *casus belli* for two of the greatest wars of modern times between China and Japan (1894-5), and between Russia and Japan (1904-5). Once Corea instructed Japan in the arts, now she seems to have lost all that. For centuries she remained the "hermit nation," and till a few years before the Anglican Mission arrived no foreigners, not even Chinese, were permitted to enter. Yet French missionaries had established themselves some fifty years before, subject to great perils and sacrificing their lives. There are few episodes in the history of Christian martyrs finer than the heroism of Corean Christians of the Roman obedience. They died by thousands between 1866 and 1870.

Buddhism had been a great force in the country, though always at war with Confucianism, until the end of the 14th century when it died out, the temples disappeared from the towns, and the priests vanished. Confucianism was left triumphant as the official cult, supplemented by a vague demonology among the unlettered classes. The language is not a Japanese or Chinese dialect, but Corean. The Chinese script is used by the educated, but there is also a Corean alphabet ("En-moun").

Shortly before Corfe arrived in Corea the American Presbyterians and Methodists had begun work there, having arrived in 1884 and 1885; and the Bible Society also had not been idle, for in 1882 the Gospel of St. Luke had been translated at Mukden in Manchuria. There followed from the same place before 1890 many other portions, all by the Rev. John Ross, of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

But even with all this effort, the ground had only been touched here and there. Even to-day, nearly forty years later, when there may be 100,000 members of the Roman Mission, and possibly another 100,000 of the American Protestants, and the 6,000 belonging to the Anglican Mission, it is certain that the Christians in Corea do not amount to 2 per cent. of the population. I have emphasised this because when the Archbishop of Canterbury called Corfe to Corea a protest was raised among some Churchmen in England on the ground that it would be an intrusion on the part of the Church of England to take up work in ground already occupied. Canon C. E. Brooke, of St. John the Divine, Kennington, whose Churchmanship none could question, waxed indignant at the protest. He comments on it: "A strange and, to my mind, a perverse straining of the principle of jurisdiction which, if acted upon in the past would have crippled the missionary effort of our Church and nation in a way altogether unbearable. . . . Why should Bishop Corfe have been singled out for adverse criticism on the question of jurisdiction when, as

far as I am aware, other Missions—such as that to Central Africa and Japan—have never had a stone thrown at them on this score. . . . Under no possible circumstances can we be said to be intruding ourselves into a diocese of some other Catholic Bishop, unless, indeed, we are going to allow the claim that the Roman Catholic Church is the Church, and that therefore she has the right to divide up the whole globe into dioceses in which she is to be granted exclusive jurisdiction.”

The mention of Canon Brooke’s name brings me to one of the most delightful episodes in Corfe’s life. Let Canon Down, with his forty years of experience of St. John’s, tell the tale.

“ Bishop Corfe, during most of his life, was a wanderer ; but wanderers generally like to have some sacred spot at home to which they can naturally turn, and for Bishop Corfe that sacred spot was the church and parish of St. John the Divine, Kennington. His long connexion with them can be traced back to the year 1872, some six years after his ordination. It was in the summer of 1872, apparently, that he felt drawn towards a nearer acquaintance with English parochial life in our large towns, and was recommended by Father Benson (Founder of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cowley) to try South London. ‘ You had better go to Elsdale,’ he said, ‘ who is working a mission at St. John’s, Brixton.’ This happened quite in the early days of a venture which has been signally blest, and before the stately church in Vassall

Road had been completed. The advice was taken, and his decision was the occasion of bringing him into touch with the staff of clergy who were building up the great work in the district now occupied by St. John the Divine, and more especially with Charles Edward Brooke, who became henceforward his lifelong friend. It is not known how long that first visit lasted—not many weeks, probably, since an extended residence would have been incompatible with his naval duties, but long enough to enkindle a warm affection for the place which he always regarded afterwards as his spiritual home, whose fortunes he followed with sympathetic interest, and which he deliberately chose as the scene of his closing years. Bishop Corfe was never officially connected with the parish of St. John the Divine, but when on furlough, or when waiting for a new commission, he invariably gravitated towards Vassall Road, giving the clergy, during his visits, all the assistance which lay in his power, and not seldom acting as officiant at the Solemn Eucharist, for which, by reason of his musical knowledge and natural dignity he was singularly qualified.

“On his accepting the post of Bishop in Corea, these old ties were strengthened rather than diminished. Canon Brooke, who had by that time become Vicar of St. John’s, was chosen to act as his commissary; the early Festivals of the Mission were held in the parish; and *Morning Calm* was for many years edited by one of its clergy.”

Corfe was consecrated in Westminster Abbey by Archbishop Benson, together with the late Bishop of Reading and the Bishop of Derby, on All Saints' Day, 1889. *The Church Pennant* for October, 1889, comments thus : " It is not often, indeed we do not know of a case since the days of the saintly Bishop Ken, that a Naval Chaplain has been called upon to take on himself the work and ministry of a Bishop. . . ." It is a fact that Ken was a Naval Chaplain ; Corfe used to refer to the fact, and delighted to call himself a naval bishop.

Corfe, after his consecration, wrote monthly letters to his friends. The second of these was to children, and characteristic of him. They were his special delight. One extract, and from that first letter to them, must suffice. He spoke of a hospital in Corea, saving souls through kindness to bodies. " Many of you know that I have been a sailor for a great part of my life. Sailors are my best and kindest friends. You will hardly believe how true a sailor's friendship can be. Do you remember what St. James says about taming wild animals ? " Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind." No one tames animals so well or so quickly as sailors. They tame them with kindness—and that is how they tamed me. They made a pet of me long ago, and now I want to shew that their petting has not spoilt me. . . . My sailor friends, I believe, are going to help build me a hospital. Our Navy has performed many

glorious deeds, but I do not think any of them will be more glorious than this. It is a beautiful thing to do good, hoping for nothing again. For a long time the people of Corea will not know even how to say thank you. . . . I want my children friends to give me a penny now and then to help me build our Orphanage." A children's branch of the Association of Prayer was formed, and it is needless to say that the Portsmouth Seamen's Orphanage had a very tender place in his heart.

The following account of Corfe's visit to Lancing in 1889, soon after his consecration, will be of interest.

The Rev. H. W. McKenzie, a former head master, says : " He came quite soon after his consecration to take a confirmation in his old school. It was, I think, the first confirmation he took. What was then unusual, he required the Christian names of each candidate, and so confirmed him. Using each boy's name (or names) made a great impression on the school at the time. Corfe also took a choral Celebration, and even now, after some 36 years or so, I remember the natural way in which his beautiful voice came out. He gave a standard which I have never heard reached since that morning. No effort, no desire for effects, just musical talking and praying. That also had a great effect on the school. Had any one more attractive blue eyes? It was the more difficult in those far off days to sing a service, as the chapel was in the crypt."

Corfe's fourth Monthly Letter was to " My dear friends of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines," in gratitude for starting the " Naval Hospital Fund " for Corea. It was to a large extent for Corfe—anything to help him ; and Corfe was wise in asking for hospitals, and one of them to be at a seaport easily visited by the Navy. So Seoul, the capital, and Chemulpo, the seaport obtained their hospitals, and for years Corfe gravitated between these two centres. The Duke of Edinburgh was President, the Rev. J. B. Harbord the first Secretary ; admirals and officers of all ranks were Vice-Presidents and members of committee, and Corfe hoped to get assistance from every ship in the Navy. The Navy spoke of " Bishop Corfe's Mission." Corfe himself pressed all the time for the world-wide duty of the Church.

He now passed on to secure Women's Work. He visited the Community of St. Peter's, Kilburn, where an Association was started for him. In due time the Sisters went out and were an untold blessing, and have remained so still. A few years afterwards he wrote as follows from Corea : " I have never been shipmates with women, and I don't understand them, except when they are Sisters, and then it is all cut and dried so far as I am concerned. They are so well drilled that they give no trouble. I never expected any when they came, but could never have supposed that these three years would have been so entirely free from all friction between them and me as they have been. They are good

women : true, sensible, devoted, humble women, who have never given me a shadow of anxiety since they landed."

All that I have recorded was but six months' work, and all the time he was preaching and speaking constantly in all parts of England. Surely there can be no better example of laying foundations which endure. I recapitulate: The beginnings of prayer, which blossomed into Q.I.P.; the training that has become Kelham; the children at once enlisted: *Morning Calm* and the "Compass" evolved: and the Hospital Naval Fund and Sisters secured. Then by himself, he embarked by way of America for his missionary sphere in July, 1890, arriving on Michaelmas Day; soon, however, to be followed by the Rev. M. N. Trollope—the present Bishop.

CHAPTER IV.

THE QUARTERLY INTERCESSION PAPER AND THE SOCIETY OF THE SACRED MISSION.

In close touch with St. John's, Kennington, Corfe before sailing laid his plans for his new work. His own ideals seem to have been plain to him from the first—clear-cut and intense. He was a man of vision without doubt; and he became the author of some unique movements which have become of world-wide importance. So much so that it is a duty to let many know facts which have too long been hidden from them.

Within a month of his consecration, Corfe inaugurated the *Association for Intercessory Prayer*, the paper being headed "Corea." This was the seed which has become what we now call affectionately, the Q.I.P. The direction given by Corfe to the paper at the beginning of 1890 has been followed ever since. Now let Corfe speak for himself: "Soon after my consecration I was invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to stay at Addington. His Grace took me to see the parish church. Before leaving it we knelt down and the Archbishop said the three collects for Good Friday. I feel that whatever the Association may be or do, it will have had its beginning and first impulse there." He proposes prayer for "Corea and elsewhere."

“ *And elsewhere* ” must be added “ for fear we should get to think either that Corea is more important than other countries, or that God’s work in Corea is different from work done for Him in other countries.” Note the characteristic attitude taken. From this he never swerved. Note also that the first Secretary of the Association was the Rev. G. R. Bullock-Webster. In March, 1890, Corfe writes : “ I have ever sought to make the interest in Corea a means rather than an end, a consequence of an increasing sense of duty owed to all the foreign missionary work of the Church. My own corner of the heathen world is neither less nor more important than the rest of the dark continents. . . . If when I have been preaching about Corea I have succeeded in making one person think more seriously of his responsibility towards Calcutta or Shoreditch, Central Africa or Qu’Appelle, Tinnevely or the Mackenzie River, I can truly say that I have been as thankful as if all his consequent interest had been centred in Corea. . . . Any centring of the affections on Corea will not conduce to the health of the Church at large, and therefore in the long run will not be helpful even to Corea.”

I do not like to say that this firm and unwavering insistence on the “ big view ” is unique at the starting-point of an Association of Prayer for a special region, but it is fine, and the results have been magnificent. I have before me the little two-page issue of the first number—March, 1890. The infant—Corfe’s child—

Bullock-Webster is the nurse. And it grew. The Report for 1890 tells of 1136 members, 115 Local Secretaries and three Branch Secretaries Overseas. Corfe also laid down another principle : membership in the Association was by *prayer, not by subscription*. Many were perplexed. No subscriptions, only prayer ? Yes. He wanted no money qualification. If people prayed, the rest would follow. Was this unique ? Certainly it was characteristic. Seven years afterwards he writes to the General Secretary of the Association : “ You have felt as keenly as I the superior value of a list of members who pray, over a list of members who pay. I have known all along that popular prejudice is in favour of the second. To many of our good friends a membership of prayer is accounted, I fear, no membership at all.”

On another occasion he wrote to the General Secretary when someone urged that the Association should beg, and waxed hot : “ I would rather come home, or go anywhere, certainly resign my bishopric, than climb down from the position of “ Prayer and Work.” I do not mean of course, that we are never to make appeals for money where money is needed—appeals to the generosity of the wealthy. But this is not—and must not be—the work of the Association. I will do it. Mr. Brooke may do it. Almost anyone may do it ; but not you. And when it is done it must be carefully dissociated from the Association.”

No one will object to my inserting one more

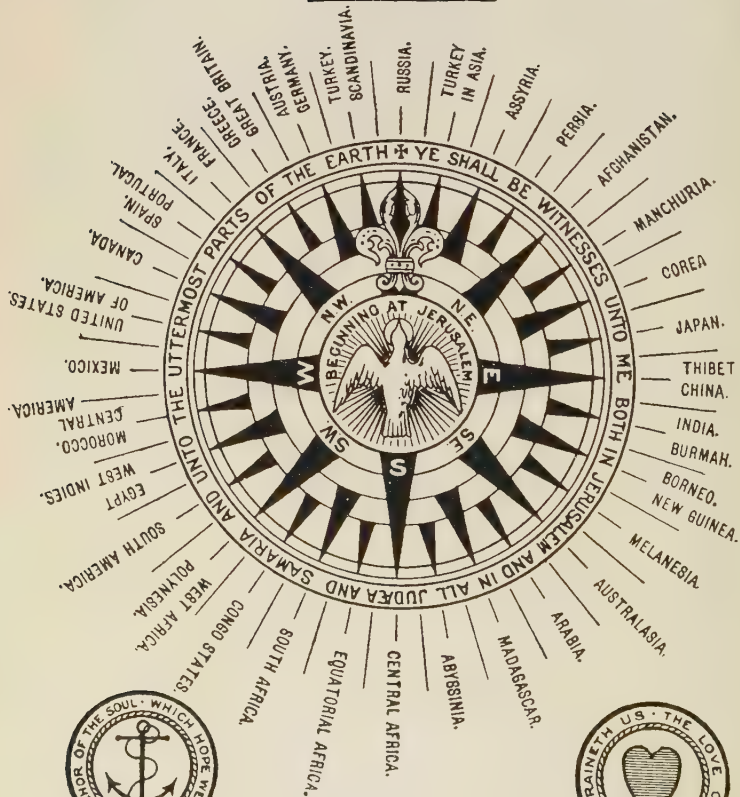
quotation from a letter to the General Secretary, written either in 1893 or 1895.

“ You are beginning to find—have found ere this—the great difference between affection for a person, and enthusiasm for a principle. So many of our first members joined for love of this unworthy creature. Then they found that they had caught a tartar : for they learned through me, through you, through *Morning Calm*, that I wanted their affection and help, not for myself, not for Corea even, but for the Church. And this, many of them, notably nearly all the naval folk, were not prepared to give. When once the principle appeared above the horizon it had no charm for these. And they have to be converted. Thus I consider that your work is, and is in the main, Mission work, and you are very gentle and patient with these friends of mine. . . . I wish, indeed, we could see our way to affiliating whole groups of other Associations, e.g., Bloemfontein, Capetown, etc., on the distinct understanding that no money was to be given to Corea, or diverted from other Associations into other channels. And this only for the sake of getting their daily prayers for all ‘ Foreign Missions.’ ”

Corfe carried his “ principle ” right through the ideals of the Corean magazine. In July, 1890 there came into existence *Morning Calm*. Into the frontispiece—and it has remained the same ever since—he introduced, in a sense, his beloved Navy. *The Compass* adorns it. Such a compass ! I cannot but quote his own



ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, CHEMULPO.
(The first church of the Mission in Corea).



THE COMPASS.

description in that famous July number : " The centre of the missionary compass is Jerusalem. To the Christian, Jerusalem must ever be the ' Middle Kingdom.' . . . The north and south line of the missionary compass therefore is the meridian of Jerusalem, the Christian's *first meridian*. But Jerusalem is to be only the beginning of the work which was inaugurated on that Feast of Pentecost. . . . Look to the north and south, to the east and west, and see the nations of the world in their bearings from Jerusalem. . . . There is no distinction made here, you see, between home and foreign missions. . . . You have England and China, France and Melanesia, Germany and Assyria, the United States of America and Manchuria. . . And to what does the needle of the missionary compass point ? To the cross, or rather to Him ' who was lifted up from the earth. . . .' See how the Dove of the Holy Spirit in the centre of the compass looks towards the cross as though He would point all men to Christ. . . . The missionary's compass needs no correction for variation or deviations. Its needle always points to ' Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' "

The Motto, *Nihil longe est Deo* chosen by Bishop Corfe from the writings of St. Augustine. was St. Monica's reply to the expressed regrets of her son that she should be dying so far from her African home. It emphasizes the mutual nearness of all those who are one in the Body of Christ. And Corfe took yet another

strong step in the same direction. In the first number of *Morning Calm*, and as its central contribution, there appeared *The Spirit of Missions*—the first of a continuous series giving news of *all* Missions of the Church overseas. And of deep interest it is to know that the first editor of these articles was the Rev. W. E. Collins, afterwards Bishop of Gibraltar. In 1897 Collins had to give up, owing to pressure of work.

In 1889-91 the Intercession Paper appeared in *Morning Calm*. In Jan., 1892, it became a separate sheet. In 1900 the paper, under its present title, was adopted by the Junior Clergy Missionary Association (S.P.G.)—the Corean Association still using it under its new title. In 1925, 77,000 copies were in circulation, and in all parts of the world.

In a volume published by Father Kelly, in 1898, entitled *The History of a Religious Idea*, it is definitely stated that the "Founder" of the above Society was Bishop Corfe. That is true in a general sense. To be more accurate, Corfe entrusted to Kelly the foundation of the "Corean Missionary Brotherhood" which, in time, developed into the Society of the Sacred Mission and went its own way. The Religious house now at Kelham has so great a reputation that I tell the story of its infancy.

The Rev. F. Kelly was on the Staff of St. Paul's, Wimbledon Park, from 1886 to 1890.

There he felt he had hardly yet found the work best suited for his life-work. In 1890 he heard that Corfe, after four months' search, had not obtained a single priest to accompany him to Corea. Although not drawn to Mission work abroad he was impelled to offer himself. [It was a mere coincidence, but interesting, to know that Corfe had been under Kelly's father in Guernsey.] But he also went to consult Canon Scott Holland, who advised him to call on the Rev. C. E. Brooke, at Kennington; he also supported the suggestion that he should join the Corean Mission. Thus Kelly, Corfe and Brooke came together with fruitful results. At first a plan was formulated that Kelly should train men in Corea. Kelly was against it, and Corfe's own experience in China was averse from the idea. Finally it was arranged that the one priest Corfe had obtained should not accompany him abroad, but remain at home to train men for Corea. At the same time the outlook was to be world-wide, not Corean in an exclusive sense. The training home was to be with Brooke. During 1890-1, twelve men had offered themselves to the Bishop. Of these only one faced Kelly's conditions, which were as follows:—
“Remember that men coming will not require any money, unless for some short visits home. They will be provided with clothing. On the other hand they must remember that the Corean Mission gives no stipends and that we do not promise ordination. They must come for the sake of the work only, not any particular kind of

work : priest or lay servant or catechist. They must be ready for anything the Bishop may choose."

The keynote was self-surrender—absolute : giving up everything for God's service. All was also to be on Brotherhood lines, and men supported by the Brotherhood do not possess separate incomes. Their first home was 99 Vassall Road, and they entered it on January 1, 1891, with two men. In the first six years, 51 were admitted, and from all trades, such as printers, blacksmiths, farmers, etc.

The first recruit for Corea went out in 1892. Meanwhile Kelly was definitely tending towards the formation of a Religious Community on definite lines. Thus in 1893 there came into existence "The Society of the Sacred Mission." In 1896 it left Vassall Road—outgrowing in many senses its first home—and betook itself to Mildenhall, with a cordial welcome from the Bishop of Ely. Up to 1898 eight men had been sent to Corea. After that, no new recruits were sent out to that Mission, though the older men remained at work in Corea for some years longer. The explanation of this gradual parting is perfectly simple and honourable on both sides. Bishop Corfe had chosen in Kelly a very strong man, stronger than he or any one else knew at the time. Kelly had strong views and possessed originality, and he was a genius. Once started on his career as director he developed what is now a remarkable force for the Church overseas and destined to be greater still. Corfe

also had his own strong views. It was a case of two strong men working 8,000 miles apart under differing circumstances. They held together as long as they could and never lost affection. As early as 1894 Corfe writes : " I am at present full of Kelly's men, the first of whom (as ordained) are to leave this time next year. You know, perhaps, that he has formed this community into a Society with rather strong rules, which seem admirable as long as they remain in Vassall Road. How the rule will fare out here is another matter. I do not know his side fully. He knows his own men and does not know the extraordinary conditions of life out here."

At the same time, when the men came out he was full of appreciation for them. In 1897, at the Annual Meeting of the Association in London, he said (as quoted in the *Church Times*) " he could not tell them of the work (Kelly's work at home), but he would tell them of its results. Last spring two men came to him who had been with Father Kelly for four years. Better men, better missionaries, he never wished to have in his diocese—most humble, most loyal, most faithful, most gentle, most obedient. He desired to speak of the men and of Father Kelly with the greatest affection, the greatest respect, the greatest hope." There is no discrepancy between the two statements. It was something like the case of a parent faced with the development of a splendid son who evidently had a future, but not exactly on the lines of the paternal home. I can imagine how Brooke,

with his shrewd sense and great humour must have watched the growth of these two missionary forces— one abroad, and one at home. I have no doubt when the Brotherhood took its flight from St. John's, Kennington, he must have known that each of his dear friends would go his own way, and that he blessed them both.

CHAPTER V.

COREA. THE FIRST YEARS.

It is not for me in this brief biography to write the history of the diocese, my duty being to tell of the man—its first Bishop. Reluctantly I must pass over the work of Corfe's pioneers, except when they come into his letters or, rather, into those letters which I quote, longing all the time to double the extracts from them. For my omissions I must refer to Bishop Trollope's delightful volume already mentioned.

His book divides Corfe's episcopate into two divisions of seven years each. Indeed, seven years elapsed before the baptism of the first Koreans in 1897, and thus it forms an epoch. The next seven years became a record of expansion.

THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS—1890-97.

It will be convenient if I put together a few details of those years and their dates.

1890.—Corfe obtained a grant of £600 from S.P.G. It was for 12 men! He said £50 was enough for a man—£100 being luxury! Two medical men went with him, Landis and Wiles. for hospitals at Chemulpo and Seoul; also two bluejackets. The first church built at Chemulpo.

1891.—Anglican jurisdiction over a large part of Manchuria handed over to him. He also

built his "Palace" at Seoul. The first celebration of Holy Communion according to the English Prayerbook, on Easter Day in Manchuria at Newchwang. The Naval Chaplains gave a printing press.

1892.—The first Anglican Church opened in Seoul. For some years ministrations were for the European population. The clergy were learning the language. Their first work, and one of the very best, was the production of *Lumen* (see page 71).

1894.—Corfe proposed that the missionaries should say their private prayers in Korean. They "discovered" the island of Kanghwa as a great missionary centre of the future.

1896.—Six Koreans were admitted as catechumens in Kanghwa. In November, 1897, two of these were baptized, but in the Bishop's absence at the Lambeth Conference. There were in Korea at the time four English clergy. During these years, Sir Walter Hillier was the British Consul in Seoul.

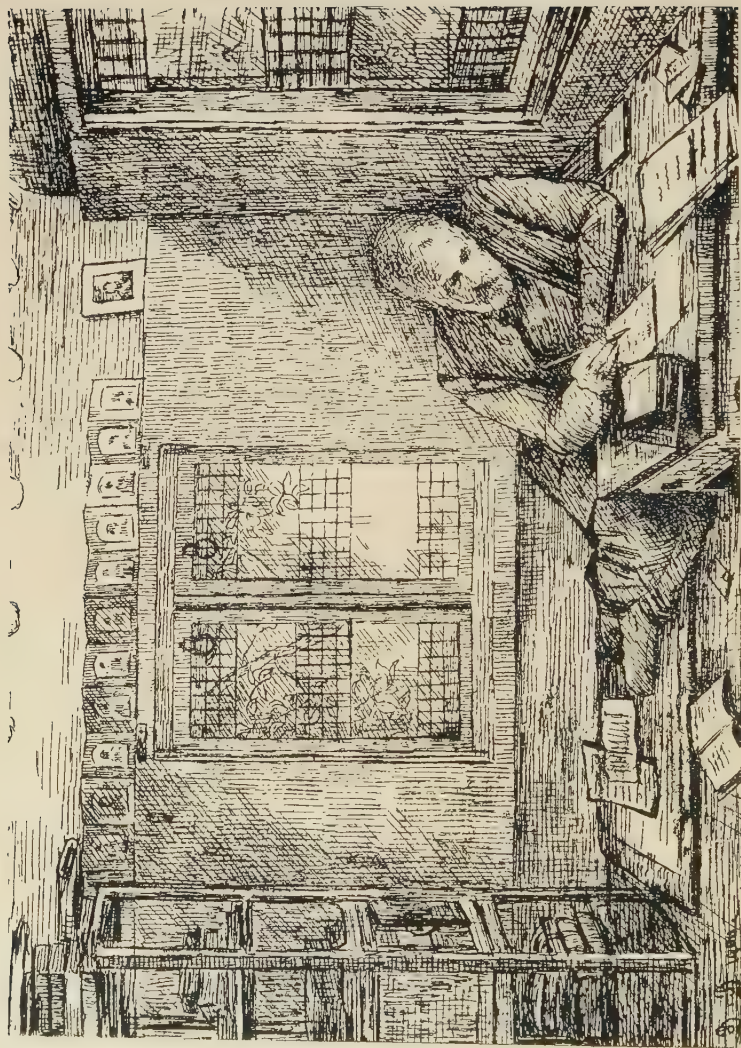
LETTERS.

THE PALACE AT CHEMULPO.

January 27, 1891.—(To his brother Robert): "The Palace here is a house which has got just four rooms, with no front door apart from the windows, and no hall and no passages. Each room leads into the other. In the corner in which all the rooms meet there is a chimney, which serves for a stove in each room. My food, therefore, has always a wholesome flavour about it—I don't quite know of what, but a



THE BISHOP'S "PALACE," SEOUL.



BISHOP CORRIE IN HIS 'PALACE,' AT CHEMULPO.

mixture of all the stuff in the doctor's bottles. The other room is the doctor's bedroom and the common larder. In a basket close to his bed is a fine pheasant, a leg of mutton, and some beef in salt, all a present from friends in Chefoo. These are matters we cannot afford to buy. As to my two rooms, one is sleeping and sitting room and the other is the church, in which last Sunday all the Church-people of the port assembled. The rooms are all about the same size, that is, some 14ft. by 13ft." He adds that he is proud to have settled down within three months of his arrival, and all are learning Corean. "Some of my people have made good progress, the doctor especially. He has his room filled with Coreans all day long. . . . For a very long time yet the Mission work done by us among the Coreans will amount to nothing. . . . We require to know a great deal more Corean than the doctor does before we can get to work." Admiral Richard Webb asked him once what results he expected : his answer was typical, "I shan't see any, and most probably my successor won't see any ; but I firmly believe good will come eventually."

In 1891, the St. Peter's Community at Kilburn sent out their first contingent, and Corfe wrote home in the same strain : "All their devotion will be put to the test of waiting patiently and fitting themselves for work which as yet the Coreans, though they need it badly enough, God knows, do not appear to want in the least." I may as well record here the legend—perhaps it

was more than that—which I heard, namely, that when he had been at work some four years, some lady asked him how many converts had been made, and Corfe burst out : “ Thank God, madam, not one.”

(Written on Christmas Day, 1890.)

“ I sit down to tell you of the very unique and remarkable way in which the first Christmas Day is being observed by two of us in Seoul.” Peake and he walked from Chemulpo, 24 miles in seven hours, bitterly cold, Corfe’s beard and moustache frozen together. He describes the Seoul house : “ We have servants’ quarters, but no servant, only a Corean coolie to light the fire and fetch water. The front door is, in reality, a double window, consisting of thin paper pasted over a trellis pattern of wood.” He describes the furniture—a table, two cots, three croquet chairs. The room held just 19. He describes furniture for the chapel, the most primitive possible. “ At 8 a.m. we had Litany. It is not a Litany day, but no one needs mercy more than ourselves. We proceeded to the Celebration with three outsiders. . . . At 9 a.m. we sat down very hungry to the remains of a tin of Chicago beef ; a pot of strawberry jam, sent from Chefoo, completed our bliss. At 11 a.m. more outsiders came. Afterwards, are you shocked to hear that pipes were lit ? . . . Whilst we were at breakfast, six mince pies came in from the Consulate (Mr. Hillier’s), and shortly before

that a sugared cake from the Chinaman who sold us the carpet. At 5 we are going to have Evensong, and at 7 p.m. dine at the Consulate."

GOOD FRIDAY. CHEMULPO, 1893.

"At the Ante-Communion Service at 8 I had a congregation of one ; at Mattins, a congregation of two, whom I spared and did not detain for the three hours devotion."

Corfe discerned as soon as he landed in Corea that he must avoid all political partisanship. The country was between at least three jealous kingdoms. In his first month (October, 1890) he writes : " I have taken a bird's eye view of Seoul politics. [He then alludes to his apprehensions concerning the attitude of other Christian Missions.] We shall have to be most careful of all we do or say or write. *Morning Calm* will be criticised most severely—not by Coreans, but by American Nonconformist missionaries.

The greater discretion must be exercised by us. We must have no political allusions in " M. C." of any kind. When they appear in my letters you must not let them go beyond the charmed circle." It will be known to all who have kept in touch with this Mission that the policy laid down by Corfe in 1890 has been consistently carried out to this day. Sir Walter Hillier gives his splendid testimony : " As British representative at Seoul, I had the

privilege of negotiating and completing the purchase of the premises of the S.P.G. Mission in that city. . . . I also arranged for and superintended the building of the first Anglican church in Seoul. . . . There is one thing I can say about my dear friend and his Mission. It is that during the whole time of my relations with the Mission in my capacity as British representative in Corea, my relations with the Bishop and his whole staff were most cordial. I never had any difference of opinion with him in matters that required suggestions from me, and I think it says much for the tact and wisdom with which he carried on his work, full of difficulties in its initiatory stages, that there was never any single word of complaint from the Corean authorities as to the action of the Mission during my term of office. When we remember that there was no Missionary Toleration Clause in our treaty with Corea, and that missionaries as such had no special privileges in that country, it says much for the wise administration of the founder of the Mission that no complaint was ever made to me of irregular or objectionable action against any member of Bishop Corfe's Mission." Corfe, indeed, before he arrived in Corea, had announced that they would not ask for protection under any treaty, though he was aware that the people hated foreigners who were resident. He went out, "called to watch a sunrise" so far as the Anglican Church was concerned.

As has already been stated, Corfe was requested to add a great district in Manchuria to his jurisdiction, and specially for the sake of Europeans settled at Newchwang. For years it had been a Treaty Port, but no resident clergyman had been settled there, much to the sorrow of Bishop Scott. There was to be no additional income. He loved the work, but it was a heavy tax on his strength. Indeed he writes in 1892: "Here a sheer hulk lies the Bishop of two Provinces! He has got rheumatism in both ancles—an ancle for each Province!" It ended in a fainting fit on Trinity Sunday, his "silver wedding day" (his ordination), as he tried to celebrate, but he failed.

On April 29, 1892, from Newchwang, he writes that the *Firebrand* came into port. The men had come ashore to his service. He returned to them in the afternoon utterly content. One of the gunner's mates produced a copy of *Morning Calm*. "The effect was magical."

In 1896 he felt something must be done to relieve the strain. "I often feel limp, and sometimes think I should break down if I were not kept going—like the cab horses in 'Pickwick,' by never leaving the shafts."

December 31, 1896.—"I still think it probable that I shall go to England in the Spring. . . . I am coming home to get the big diocese cut in two. The supervision of two countries, and the two languages, is too much for me. The work is languishing for want of a head in both Corea

and Manchuria. . . . But I hope to see your ship, and that will be a great joy, though I am getting very shy when ship visiting now. The old wounds open and I get miserable."

As a matter of fact it was the Bishop's duty to come home in 1897 in order to attend the Lambeth Conference.

Perhaps what held him back is explained by the following extract from one of his letters:—"Knowing naval men pretty well by this time I was aware that they would expect me to get bored by the work and return to England 'at the end of the commission.' Consequently from the first when they have said to me, 'when are you going to take a trip to England?' I have invariably said, 'I hope never. This commission is for life, unless I get blind and deaf and an encumbrance to the work.' In this I have never wavered, though I have invariably added that 'it is absurd for a man to say he will never return to England again if business calls one. If such is the case I trust I shall come back as soon as possible.'"

Corfe and his colleagues devoted themselves unsparingly to the study of the language throughout the first three or four years. Till they could publish something, or speak to Koreans, their foundations would not be laid. Their first effort consisted in the preparation of a "Tract," and truly admirable it was in its conception. They wished to give a careful answer to the question, "What is the Faith you preach?" "By what authority do you do these

things ? ” They feared lest their insufficient knowledge of the languages might lead astray those who were being instructed. “ *Lumen* ”—the first word of “ *A Light to Lighten the Gentiles* ”—gives a concise history of the life of our Lord in Scripture language and in 400 verses. The preface is the speech of St. Paul at Athens, and there is a summing-up at the end in words from the Epistles.

It is excellent for use, whether at home or abroad, and was published by S.P.C.K. in the English edition.

Corfe presented a copy to all the Bishops at the Lambeth Conference of 1897 ; the Bishop of Chota Nagpur had it translated into Hindi. In 1890 the Mission had no Prayer Book or Catechism in Corean, nor even an adequate translation of the Bible, the available portions of it were considered unsatisfactory even by the translators at that date. *Lumen* was printed by the Mission Press in two languages, in Chinese and in En-Moun, the alphabetical script used in Corea, except by the educated. The whole Mission staff was engaged in this task, Corfe himself spending all available time on it. And here it is only right to set forth the true state of the case regarding Bishop Corfe’s linguistic difficulties. His failure was confined to the *spoken* Corean. He was never able either to understand colloquial Corean, or to speak it acceptably. But it was very different with the written language. He gained a good knowledge of Chinese and of Corean for the purposes of writing and translations.

On February 6, 1893, he writes to (now Admiral) Richard Webb : “ This language is a great difficulty to me. I know thousands of words, but hardly know how to string them together ; and if I do, I take such a long time about it that the man is out of sight before I can can get my question off.”

I break off now to tell of the more human side.

To a Naval friend, 1891.—“ The work has been incessant since I left England. I used to be too busy to write because of the many sermons which had to be preached in all parts of England. I have *no* sermons now—have not preached for nearly three months. But there has been an amazing lot of work to do in settling people down into houses, and a regular habit of living. . . . Think of me, therefore, as a skipper of a very small craft—a torpedo-boat if you like—with a crew of nine men.

. . . The fact is my missionary work has not really begun yet, and will not begin until I can make something of this difficult language. So that I am at school once more.”

He is enthusiastic over Dr. Wiles, “ who not only will not receive a penny from the Mission, but uses all his large practice in Seoul on behalf of the Mission, giving us money or building us hospitals. That is the kind of missionary *I* like—and nearly 70 too !”

“ How thankful I am now that in my missionary travels in England I everywhere put five or seven years as the limit when we might expect

to have work to report which would be recognised as 'progress' by the ordinary Englishman. And yet none of my people are idle. Personally I feel a great goose. I ought to be at the head of them all, talking and acting. On the contrary I do nothing, and in the presence of a Corean am as silent as Sam Weller's 'drum with a hole in it.' All these side-lights will serve to make you acquainted with the present position of the Mission, its difficulties, desires, failures, fears and hopes."

"I have reams of letters to write ; have even given up learning Corean for a time to write them. The burden of responsibility and routine business has increased largely of late, and I long more than ever for the day—which seems further off than ever—when I can go and bury myself in the country and live amongst these people and away from all white men. . . . I shall never learn to love and know my business until I do live amongst them. What a growl this is ! . . . Accustom yourself to think of these poor people in China and Japan as made, like you, in God's image. They have their hopes and fears ; their nobility of nature ; their finer, gentler human feelings, as our mothers and sisters have. The Englishman should walk amongst them with an air of 'noblesse oblige'—shrinking from base and mean and cowardly and selfish actions, because he *is* an Englishman, and because they are just the sort of people who are likely to be raised above their present level when they see their finer and more generous feelings

displayed in an Englishman who has such advantages over them. I am a horrid Briton, and think that the God-fearing Englishman is the finest creature on God's earth. . . .

"Pray see as much of the good people in Vassall Road as you can. It is a grand place in which to go into dry dock and have the barnacles scraped off. I always found it so, and hope with all my heart that you, too, will do the same. Never be ashamed to go. No matter how bad things have been with you. . . .

"I hear very little naval news now. Perhaps that is good for me ; but I am always hungry for it.

"The day before yesterday I left Corea in *Leander*, which brought the Minister on a visit from Peking. Those dear Leanders, they have been so kind ; but I was not forty-eight hours on board. Of course, I have got Navy fever again, and must quickly dive into Chinese dirt and ignorance to get cured of it."

To the same.

"Don't take it to heart if you cannot get—(a much-wanted appointment). If you do not get appointed it will be because God has something better for you. And see that you are prepared to take it when it is offered. Don't put it down as a thing you didn't *deserve* if your application is refused. Charles Gordon never set his heart on things in such a way as to be in despair if he never got them. It is hard, I know, to do it ; but it is so much braver and freer to say :

‘Where God does not point, there I will not willingly go—however much my own will points in that direction. For to carry out my own will when it is not His will concerning me is to debase myself to court disaster.’ . . . I counsel you to cast all your care on Him Who cares for you. This sounds like nonsense : you cannot—or, at least, you won’t—cast *all* your care on Him. But you will cast your care on Him more and more and find in doing so your true ‘heartsease.’ ”

Corfe expected early in 1892 a visit from Father Benson. On January 6, he writes characteristically from Chemulpo : “To-day I feel as if I had been lifted up to a great height and suddenly let fall, coming down with a bump. For more than three weeks letters and telegrams have prepared me for a visit from Father Benson, one of my oldest and dearest friends, on his way home from Bombay to Boston. He was to spend three precious days with us. All the Mission was coming from Seoul, and on the second day I had proposed to have a Retreat conducted by him. Everything was ready, even a leg of mutton and a meat pie (for such things are necessary, you know, even for Retreats). The steamer arrived this morning. The Epiphany Celebration in St. Michael’s Church was delayed until I should arrive from the steamer with the Father a prisoner. But there was no Father, only a horrid letter saying that the steamers were so inconvenient that he could not make the connexion. So a telegram was sent

to Seoul, "don't come." The grotesqueness of the situation as usual came to my relief, and I have been roaring with laughter, especially at the poor discredited meat pie. But, if I hadn't laughed I should have cried, so great is the apparent loss to us ; but if we only bear it as we ought it will turn out to have been no loss, but a greater gain than his coming would have been. God is so wise, you know. It sounds like a truism, but we don't half believe it."

CHAPTER VI.

THE YEARS 1897 TO 1904.—RELATIONS
WITH S.P.G., HIS MUSIC, BENEFACTIONS,
AND SOME CHARACTER SKETCHES.

During the first seven years Corfe “ well and truly ” laid foundations. Then appropriately he was present at a Lambeth Conference of Bishops. But this gallant soul must have returned to his diocese in 1898 with misgivings. In that year the supply of men from Kelly’s Community ceased, and quite naturally. That society was a fully organised entity with strong disciplinary rules. The Korean Mission was also organised with minute attention to details. A glance at the rules and regulations of the diocese makes plain how Corfe had entered into the spirit (if I may say so) of the Navy in the minuteness and clearness of the orders he formulated for every part of Church-life—all meticulously drawn out. And these two highly organised bodies lived far apart. Moreover, what should be the connexion between S.P.G. the paymaster, and the S.S.M.? He returned with two burdens on his mind. The language difficulty remained, namely, the impossibility for him of grappling with the colloquial Korean speech—and after seven years. Moreover he failed in his attempt to staff his Mission. I think I can understand it. It was a celibate Mission : and I think Corfe naturally accentuated the severity and simplicity of its life, giving the

impression to men that the rule was of undeviating strictness. Meanwhile, scores of dioceses overseas were offering men perhaps a more ordinary life and certainly a more adaptable rule. It gives one a sore heart to watch this lovable, deeply spiritual and beautiful person searching almost in vain for help in the romantic venture which he undertook and for which he gave up his beloved Navy.

So, for lack of doctors, hospitals were closed during these years at Seoul, and for a time at Chemulpo. Dr. Landis died. The Manchurian jurisdiction weighed more and more heavily till Bishop Scott resumed charge in 1901. But there are some very bright gleams. Work among the Japanese prospered. The Kanghwa centre especially flourished and spread to On-su-tong—ten miles away—and in 1900 there were baptisms—18 in Kanghwa and the same number in Seoul. In 1901 the beautiful church built in Korean style, at Kanghwa, was dedicated. In 1904 the baptized numbered 200, three-fourths in Kanghwa and On-su-tong.

The mention of these two places recalls to me one of the days which stands out among my own missionary travels as beautiful as well as of deep interest. In December, 1910, I left Chemulpo in a *sampan* in the morning, clad in Dr. Weir's fur coat, with hot water bottles dispersed about my person, temperature 17° below zero. We landed and walked in the afternoon to On-su-tong and were immersed next morning in glorious Korean services, till the hour

came to walk the ten miles to Kanghwa itself. This was the day that abides in memory. Snow on the hills, bright sunshine, a company of missionaries with me, great obeisances from Coreans saying farewell. Then as we walked towards our Zion every side-path brought to us groups of Christians welcoming us with low prostrations and then falling in behind us on our way—at times a cluster of men in white, again bands of women in red, green or white. The long procession grew as we wound among the hills, till three miles from Kangwha we were met by a host of the faithful come to give us welcome ; and so we ascended to the spacious Church. Nothing more picturesque, more arresting to eye and mind can be imagined. And dear Corfe laid the foundations of that Christian life.

But I must return to earth. In 1901, Corfe lost Trollope from the Mission. He returned to England on furlough, being detained by his father's ill-health. He took up Dolling's work at St. Saviour's, Poplar. We, meanwhile, in S.P.G. House were often brought up against Corfe's meticulous care for keeping to rules. I can remember times when we suggested some modification of an ordinance in order to help him out of a difficulty, and how we were met with " No, no, no," uttered in his silvery voice. It revealed in part his difficulties in obtaining helpers. Let us call it the defect of one of his noblest qualities, the desire to obey without regard to consequences. One who is an excellent judge of men writes : " I doubt if he quite

realised the fundamental complexities of what besets a Bishop, a missionary, a training college." It seemed impossible for him to be content with exceptions to a rule once laid down.

He had had some bad moments, chiefly owing to the delicate questions how far the funds of the Korean Special Fund ought to weigh with those who determine the amount of the S.P.G. Grant.

He writes generously: "No societies are perfect. If Mr. Tucker is autocratic he is so in a constitutional way. I regard him as one of the most faithful as well as most able of Churchmen. If, as his enemies say, Mr. Tucker is the S.P.G., then considering what quiet, thorough-going work the Society does in all parts of the world, Mr. Tucker must be a wonderful man indeed."

The following words will testify to Corfe's feelings towards S.P.G. In a letter to the Mission Staff, written in 1900, he says: "I will ask you to bear one or two things in mind. By many of our most generous supporters this Mission has always been known as Bishop Corfe's Mission to Corea. By many others it is known as the S.P.G. Mission to Corea. How true, in a sense, this latter name is I need not say. I have often called the Society 'the Mother of Churches,' and she has been a true mother to us. But what the Society aims at in its work is what each one of us is aiming at—namely the establishment of a branch of the Catholic Church in Corea, complete in its organization and, from the first, learning so to

develop its energies, spiritual and temporal, as to present to all men a concrete body—a seedling at first, but a seedling whose ‘life is in itself.’ I do not know that I shall live to see it formed, but I feel I must strain every nerve before I die to get the Church at home to recognize the Mission, not under my name nor under the honoured name of the Society, but as one of her own children—‘a very member incorporate in the Mystical Body of Christ.’ ”

One of Corfe’s recreations consisted in musical composition. His brother Robert possesses six volumes of his hymn tunes and other musical efforts, and the hymn tunes alone number 240, out of which one has been chosen for this volume. He often used to print his tunes as Christmas cards, and he seems to have been specially busy whilst at the Peking Legation as chaplain after his retirement. In 1906 he sends Mrs. Staley his tune for Ken’s Evening Hymn, and writes : “ The idea is that of a mother singing the melody as she rocks her baby’s cradle, a piano in an adjoining room, a harmonium playing softly. I have been a good deal lately at my old school, St. Michael’s, Tenbury. There was much music there, and Tallis’ canon (than which no better tunes can be found) was associated with my earliest years. Ever since then, Bishop Ken’s hymn has been my habitual ‘night cap.’ I try to fall asleep somewhere between the first and last verse ! ”

He apologises in another letter for attempting

a new tune when there was a very good one already, but he adds, " it is delightful to address God sometimes in one's own words, or in words which one believes to be one's own."

In 1907 he writes to the same from Peking, " I have been rather ambitious during the Christmas season. Nos. 27, 624, 597, 590, 568, 44, 315, and ' Up in Heaven ' have all been ' bagged,' I hope not in more senses than one."

So in 1901, referring to Paymaster-in-Chief J. W. Lishman, Mrs. Staley's father, and writing from Yokohama, " He was learning the flute, and though I knew no more how to play the flute than to play the banjo, I would teach him the notes and, above all, keep time."

Many have related how his best recreation when tired out was to lie on his back and read the scores of Beethoven and Wagner; and the Rev. Wilfrid Gurney adds a delicious touch: " My mother once showed him a Christmas song I had written when only seven years old. It was very poor, but its childlike simplicity pleased him, and he wrote a delightful tune for it, styled, ' Youth and Age,' words by W. M. Gurney, æt: seven, music by C. J. Corfe, æt: 70."

Now for a few more human touches. Wilfrid Gurney, who joined him in 1903, says " Corfe lived very plainly in Corea and never broke his fast before noon. He carried about single plays of Shakespeare, which he delighted to read at odd moments, and he had a somewhat perverse humour, delighting in contrasts and opposites.

A most lovable man, shy in some ways and a great stickler for etiquette. He had a mind trained and disciplined by the exact routine of the Royal Navy, generous to a degree and very simple in business matters. Any form of ostentation was horrible to him. When staying with my people in Leamington a horrified housemaid informed my mother in the morning that he had not slept in his bed, he had simply lain on the floor. Thoughtful for others, he carried the fear of giving trouble to excess and daily ate rice pudding when living in rooms in London, though he disliked it intensely. His chief limitation consisted in a fear of making mistakes which kept things back in Corea longer than was necessary."

The Rev. F. H. Sprent tells some delightful stories. "On my second visit to Corea I fetched up in Seoul after a night journey in an open boat from Chemulpo, quite voiceless and with a painful throat. He gave up his one little bedroom in his 'Palace' and slept many nights on the floor in the tiny kitchen, sending his Chinese cook to sleep out. Though living a hard life himself he was an expert in nursing—as so many old sailors are. Travellers and globe-trotters gave him much amusement. Mrs. Isabella Bishop wanted a live Corean ox; the Bishop bought one and shipped it home. He seldom bought anything for himself, and made his clothes last a long time: an overcoat that he had worn off and on for 25 years he took home to Wippell. Wippells were so pleased that they

gave him a new one in exchange, exhibiting the old one as 'worn by a Naval Chaplain in many strange parts of the world for a quarter of a century.' On one of his visits to England *via* Siberia, he stayed with us at Newchwang, and he asked Mrs. Sprent to buy him some pommeloos. They were purchased and placed in the rack above his sleeping berth. On arrival in London he wrote what he termed 'a bread and butter letter,' and related how upon his arrival he had immediately walked to Marlborough House and left 'with the man at the door' four of the pommeloos 'for the Queen's supper.' "

I append Dr. Weir's reminiscences also. When I was at Chemulpo in 1910, Weir pointed out Corfe's house and told how anxious they were that the Bishop should not starve himself. He was so desirous to live the simplest life, and humour always bubbled. "The Bishop used to desire to establish two societies, one of which was to be joined by those who were never to speak ill of the weather, the other for the purpose of eating mince pies!—both ideas characteristic of him." "When he lived at Chemulpo he used to spend much of his time sitting on the little verandah of his house with his telescope, watching for a British man-o'-war, As soon as one appeared he rushed off down town to buy lemons and made lemonade to be ready to entertain any sailor of any rank who might come ashore." Weir also tells how his room was so low that a pair of socks were nailed against a certain corner to deaden the blow.

“ Being weak in colloquial Corean (more than weak—they say his pronunciation was “ abominable ”) he naturally had great trouble with his servants, who imposed upon him knowing his kindness. Stories were told about the attempts he made to get fresh toast, and his failures to get it. Allusion also has been made already to his hatred of ostentation. In consequence of this he specially dreaded the Chinese New Year, when it is customary for Coreans to come and make obeisance to their superiors. Corfe did all he could to avoid such scenes—not always with success. On one occasion a servant pursued him into a lady’s house, found him in the drawing-room, begged him to be seated and proceeded to knock his (the servant’s) head on the floor before him.”

There never was a more generous man. On his own part he lived always on the smallest possible sum. He gave away magnificently, and there is a nobility of attitude about his ideals which will help all who read these pages. The following letters explain themselves :—

The Hospital Naval Fund, 1890 : “ There should be a permanent notice in the magazine to the effect that all money sent by officers and men belonging to the Navy will be devoted to the H.N.F., unless otherwise specified. . . . We must not in any way mix ourselves up with this Naval hospital work : help them as much as possible to realise their responsibility in subscribing to such a fund, which I want to get them to think is their fund—not mine. I mean

them to take a pride in it when I am dead and buried."

The destination of his own gifts.—*Chefoo, June 26, 1892.*—"There was a sentence in your speech which, owing to the reporter's condensations, I did not clearly understand. You seemed to be apologising for me for sending money home, Corea not needing it so much as others. . . . You are so good a friend to me that I should like to say to you privately what I can never say in public. I have a pension from the Navy of £100 a year, but having left the service 14 years before the age limit, and having left it in spite of the remonstrances of those whom I know and love best, I determined that as long as I was able I would every year return to the Navy in some form or other, the money which I had earned in it, and so it goes in various Naval Charities. Then I resolved, as long as I was in a position to do so, to contribute out of my own pocket to the General Fund of the S.P.G. the amount per annum which I spend out of the grant to Corea on myself. I send it to the General Fund rather than to Corea, because the grant for our first six years is more than ample, and because it is the most practical way of carrying out the rules of our Association, for I have no doubt my money sent annually to S.P.G. finds its way into all parts of the world.

The same subject.—*Chemulpo, April 10, 1893.*—"To me it is a hateful thing to have to speak to my right hand of what my left hand does. But I am more than ever—or, at least I desire

to be more than ever—the servant of the Church, and it would be ungracious indeed were I to withhold from my kind heads of departments the means of setting the Mission right when anything threatens to go wrong. You can always say that the bishopric has no endowment, and that the present occupant of the diocese strives ever to dispense with the Mission funds for his own maintenance, so that he may be chargeable to no one; that with regard to the money he is able to give away in ‘charities’ he no more considers it his duty at present to spend it all on Corea than the good people at home consider it their duty to spend their superfluous cash wholly on some particular Mission or charity. . . . The £100 I give yearly to S.P.G. for other purposes than Corea, I so give as a member of the Association to which all Foreign Missions are equally dear. But in return for this I claim—as ‘the labourer is worthy of his hire’—to place myself (equally with the rest of the labourers who are on the S.P.G. list in Corea) on the same footing as my brethren of the priesthood and laity—all of whose personal expenses fall far short of £100 a year.”

I think it will come as a surprise to many to be informed that it was Bishop Corfe who endowed *anonymously* the bishopric of Shantung. It will be remembered that he worked for eighteen months in what became, largely through his action, the Diocese of Shantung, being a slice taken off from the Diocese of North China in 1901, and in order to relieve

the pressure upon Bishop Scott. The following facts barely stated, are taken from the Journals of "the Colonial Bishopricks Fund." On December 23, 1897, Bishop Corfe had informed the Council of that fund that he was desirous to raise £5000 in order to provide a small endowment for the bishopric of the Church of England in Corea and Manchuria. Four years passed, and it appears that Corfe had come to the conclusion that it would be better to get Shantung endowed, more especially if by so doing he might be able to detach Manchuria from Corea and hand it over to North China. On May 14, 1901, Bishop Corfe's solicitors wrote to the above fund saying that "a client" would transfer Stock to them of the face value of £5,750 as a contribution towards the endowment of the Shantung bishopric. This without any conditions. But further, the same client would transfer a second sum of the face value of £4,655 on the understanding that the effect of the creation of the new diocese would be to transfer to the diocese of North China the Province of Manchuria, thus relieving Corea. The terms were accepted. There is no doubt that it was Corfe who had given more than £10,000 for the above purpose.

I had better record here also what Corfe effected by his Will drawn up on February 4, 1909, for Corea. He bequeathed a capital sum sufficient at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to make the permanent income of the Bishop in Corea up to the sum of £400. The sum thus handed over to the C.B.F. was £2,092 10s. od.

CHAPTER VII.

RESIGNATION—FURTHER LABOURS— THE LAST YEARS.

The day came when Corfe, high-minded, devoted, selfless, felt that he must acknowledge failure. He had been in England for a year in 1903 trying to get workers for his terribly depleted staff and had failed. Moreover the language difficulty could not be overcome. On St. James' Day (July 25), 1904, he wrote to the clergy and laity in his diocese. I quote sufficient sentences: "The burden of the clergy and native congregations—heavy enough in all pioneer and experimental work—has for some years been increased because the Bishop has been unable to take his due share of them. . . . They have seen that the power of their Bishop to guide and support them (in the growing needs of the Diocese) was diminishing: that he can neither preach a sermon nor teach a Sunday School class. . . . I may say that I did write to the late Archbishop of Canterbury more than two years since, asking him to allow me to resign for the reason I have given to the present Archbishop, and am now giving to you. That letter was never sent. I had not the courage to send it. Perhaps it will be truer to say that it seemed right not to send it until I had done all that a Bishop could do to fill the vacancies caused by the sudden loss of three of his clergy—

nearly half the clerical staff. . . . I have returned to find that the staff of clergy, already too small for the supply of our parishes, threatens in the immediate future to become smaller. . . . Were I able to do any pastoral work . . . I should not be moved by these departures, but should remain at my post till death removed me. This was my hope in 1888, and has always been my hope, until recent years have made it evident to me, as to others, that by my ignorance of the vernacular . . . I am hindering rather than helping the work of God amongst us. The pioneer stage of the Mission has been reached, and been passed. The task which now confronts us is one of a very different nature and may well require faculties in the Bishop which one who was supposed to have some fitness for pioneer work may not possess. . . .”

It gives one a lump in one's throat as one reads words so humble and so dignified. He was succeeded by the Rev. A. B. Turner, who had been working in the Mission for seven years.

It will be a fit conclusion to Corfe's Korean episcopate if I call attention to the remarkable document (to which allusion has already been made), entitled *The Anglican Church in Corea*. It is in reality a set of Regulations touching on the whole Church life of a member of the Church. It begins with an introduction of twelve pages, pointing out that “the Use” of the diocese was not forced upon the clergy, but composed with their full assent, and in close connexion at every point with Archbishop

Temple, then the Primate. Even the use of incense was not denied. There are rules of marriage, a Catechism for catechumens, and offices for all sorts of occasions. Printed beautifully by the Seoul Mission Press, it is certainly a noteworthy document and gives a fuller idea of the completeness, even to small details, with which the first Bishop laid foundations, which have never needed alteration.

Corfe did not re-visit his old diocese after his resignation, but time and again he travelled out to China to help Bishop Scott in ministering to English-speaking residents. Many a conversation we had at S.P.G. House during those years before he went out, and on his return. The following is a brief account of his work.

In 1906 he arrived in Peking and became chaplain at the British Legation for twelve months, permitting Norris to take furlough.

In 1909 he became chaplain at Newchwang, in Manchuria, in order to enable the Rev. F. H. Sprent to get a holiday, and returned after six months.

In 1910 he returned to Newchwang, bringing two clergymen for chaplaincies in Manchuria.

In 1912 he undertook the chaplain's duty at Dalny, in Manchuria, and met there the Bishops of North China, Corea, and S. Tokyo, in consultation concerning the Church's mission work in the Far East. He was not young, his health was far from good, yet four times he travelled out to do what he could. I remember how he consulted with me whether he should not go

out a fifth time, but it was against medical orders, and he obeyed.

He made his home, of course, at St. John's, Kennington. I remember asking him whether now he had his books and chattels round him ? he looked humorous, and said : " I think there are a few old boots." Canon Down writes : " In 1905, Bishop Corfe sent in his resignation and returned to England ; but he did not settle in the parish until Canon Brooke's death six years later, when he was invited to make his home at the Vicarage. This was the beginning of an arrangement which, in some shape or other, lasted until the time of his death."

" In addition to all these activities, he undertook a large number of confirmations for his brother Bishops in England, especially in the country parishes of the Oxford Diocese."

" Owing to age, and increasing infirmity, the doctors insisted upon the reduction of all this output. It was a real sorrow when he was told that he must not go again to the East, and confine his attention to less exacting duties. This meant that during the last years of his life, though he continued to travel about at home, he spent much more of his time in Vassall Road, and became still more closely identified with the work of the parish. He made himself almost entirely responsible for the Sung Eucharist on Sunday, which preceded the Solemn Celebration, and which was of a simpler and more congregational character. He delighted in this service, nor could the congregation of children

and working folk fail to have been impressed by the deep reverence and venerable dignity of the Celebrant. It was, moreover, an intense pleasure to him when he was asked to undertake the character of St. Joseph in the Bethlehem Tableaux at Christmas, which hitherto had been taken by Canon Brooke ; and no pains were spared by him to make the representation all that it had been in the time of his distinguished predecessor. He was always glad, in this and in other respects, to step into any little gap of usefulness, such as an occasional sermon, or administering the sacrament of confirmation to the aged, or to others who for some reasons had not been able to avail themselves of the more public occasions."

"Possibly a few impressions made by the Bishop in these later days may not be altogether out of place. When Whitefield was asked whether a certain person was a Christian, he replied, "I do not know ; for I have never seen him at home." No one who knew Bishop Corfe in the family circle would have had much doubt about his answer to that question. Not only was he punctiliously regular in all his habits, but invariably good-tempered, cheerful, considerate, courteous to all with whom he had to do. He was universally respected and beloved by the servants, who appreciated his kindness and gratitude, and who came to regard it as a privilege to minister to his needs. As a companion he was always genial, helpful, sympathetic. He had an unusual capacity for friendship and this

is never possible without readiness for taking trouble and making sacrifices and this was manifested in many ways. He gave his friends of his very best. What hours he must have spent on his correspondence, which was certainly not regarded as a secondary matter, but as a solemn duty to be performed with the utmost precision and care ! What fatigue must have accompanied those numberless visits to persons whom he could comfort, who needed his counsel, who had been brought under his influence, or for whom he felt some responsibility. There were the workers for the Mission, the children of the Orphanage at Portsmouth—whom he never forgot—, his old naval friends—those whom he met abroad ; and all alike came in for some share of his loving service. The time and the money which he would spend upon single cases was most remarkable.”

In 1913, Corfe’s great friend, Bishop Scott, resigned, but being a first-rate Chinese scholar, elected, with the enthusiastic approval of the Mission, to live in Peking, giving all help to his successor, Bishop Norris. Corfe writes : “ Bishop Scott is resigning, not from ill-health, but from a sense of duty. His has been a noble Episcopate, made up in equal parts of Yorkshire grit, sanctified common sense, and singular loyalty to God and his Church.”

But I began to see that my friend was failing, and at the beginning of 1921 he was taken ill on his way to a confirmation. For three months he lingered, and was the best of

patients, endearing himself more than ever to those about him. As his last hours drew near he had the joy of having with him the Rev. Arnold Scott, the Bishop-designate of Shantung, the diocese he had himself endowed. Indeed, next to Corea, there was no region in which he had deeper interests than in North China. He passed away on June 30, 1921 : and when we assembled in St. John's Church, Kennington, to bless God for his life ere we laid him to rest at Brookwood, what was our joy to see Bishop Scott in the church, called to take a leading part in that last service. His old friend of 46 years had just arrived in England. There could not have been a happier coincidence.

With us was Admiral Sir Stanley Cecil Colville, as representing the King. Indeed, it was a memorable congregation which met that day to bear testimony to one greatly beloved. Naval men of all ranks, and many of the clergy who had known and honoured him for years. I can do nothing better than to give as a fitting conclusion to this record the artless words of a bluejacket. It was, I believe, almost the last letter Corfe received.

"Dear Sir,—I am more sorry than I can express to you how very grieved I am to find that you are ill. I called on Saturday to express my gratitude to you for the splendid recommendation you sent to my present employers that got me the job straight away ; and now you are so poorly. I'm not much of a hand at praying, but I've been doing my very best since

Saturday, and if our great Admiral up above understands the hearts of men He will know that in whatever shape our prayers are offered up for you, they're heartfelt and sincere. God bless you, dear old shipmate, comforter and adviser to many thousands of us on the lower deck. What a happy place a ship would have been if our quarter-deck officers only understood and studied us as you used to do. I hope you will excuse me writing to you, dear Sir, but if I cannot speak to you personally my only excuse is I must speak to you on paper. So, please do not be cross with me, and now wishing you a speedy recovery, I remain for all time your most sincere well wisher and faithful servant."

So farewell—most selfless and humble-hearted of men—beautiful in labours on sea and land, as priest and bishop—most generous of men and best of comrades. We praise God for the light that shone thus on us. We live to glorify the Heavenly Father, because you have lived. So, farewell.

82061

92
C812

Montgomery H H
Charles John Corfe

Nov 8 '63
Howard

18 '63

92

C812

82061

